

# The Development of the Canon of the New Testament

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This survey covers a small part of the huge body of New Testament studies --- how the Church selected certain writings as authoritative and separated them from a larger body of early Christian literature. In view of the central importance that the New Testament has within Christianity, it is amazing that there is an absence of detailed accounts of such a significant process. My goal is to collect and organize the information that is available, and make it easily accessible in the form of hypertext (see the [Hypertext Conventions](#)). I especially hope this site will be useful to persons who cherish the New Testament, but are unfamiliar with the history of its development. For this development 'at a glance', see the [Cross Reference Table: Writings and Authorities](#).

The history, as covered in this survey, spans the first four centuries of Christianity, and was a long continuous process. It was not only a task of collecting, but also of sifting and rejecting. It was not the result of a deliberate decree by an individual or a council near the beginning of the Christian era. The collection of New Testament books took place gradually over many years by the pressure of various kinds of circumstances and influences, some external and others internal to the life of congregations. Different factors operated at different times and in different places. Some of the influences were constant, others were periodic; some were local, and others were operative where the Church had been planted.

This subject is an avocation of mine. I am not a scholar and cannot read any ancient languages. There is no original research here; I have freely copied from professional historians, especially from these books:

ΚΥΝΕΝΑΓΓΕΛΙΑ  
ΦΑΣΚΑΙΕΠΙΣΤΕΥ  
ΤΟΙΣΟΠΟΥΤΩΣΤΕ  
ΓΡΑΠΤΑΠΡΑΘΕΙΝ  
ΤΟΝΧΗΚΑΙΑΝΜΗ  
ΝΑΙΕΚΝΕΚΡΩΝ  
ΠΙΤΡΕΤΗΜΕΡΑΣ  
ΚΗΡΥΧΟΗΝΑΙΕΤΙ  
ΤΩΟΝΟΜΑΤΙΑΤΗ  
ΜΕΤΑΝΟΓΑΝΕΙΣΑ  
ΦΕΣΙΝΑΜΑΡΤΙΩΝ  
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ΤΟΙΣΟΠΟΥΤΩΣΤΕ  
ΓΡΑΠΤΑΠΡΑΘΕΙΝ  
ΤΟΝΧΗΚΑΙΑΝΜΗ  
ΝΑΙΕΚΝΕΚΡΩΝ  
ΠΙΤΡΕΤΗΜΕΡΑΣ  
ΚΗΡΥΧΟΗΝΑΙΕΤΙ  
ΤΩΟΝΟΜΑΤΙΑΤΗ  
ΜΕΤΑΝΟΓΑΝΕΙΣΑ  
ΦΕΣΙΝΑΜΑΡΤΙΩΝ  
ΕΔΝΤΟΝΗΚΥΝΗ  
ΚΥΝΕΝΑΓΓΕΛΙΑ  
ΦΑΣΚΑΙΕΠΙΣΤΕΥ  
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ΤΩΟΝΟΜΑΤΙΑΤΗ  
ΜΕΤΑΝΟΓΑΝΕΙΣΑ  
ΦΕΣΙΝΑΜΑΡΤΙΩΝ  
ΕΔΝΤΟΝΗΚΥΝΗ

Metzger, Bruce M.  
[The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance.](#)  
Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1987.  
ISBN: 0198269544

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, ed.  
[New Testament Apocrypha, 6th edition.](#) 2 Vols.  
Westminster/John Knox Press.  
Louisville.1989.  
ISBN: 0664218784 and ISBN: 0664218792

If you find my survey interesting, and want to explore this subject further, please go out and buy them. Both are available at [Amazon Books](#) and [Christian Book Distributors](#). I have also entered text from the [Encyclopædia Britannica](#) 15th ed. (1982).

My interest in the subject started with 2 classes on the Bible at [De Anza College](#) in Cupertino California. I want to thank my teachers, Don Buck and Jim Luotto.

Pages created by Glenn Davis, 1997-2004.

For additions, corrections, and comments send e-mail to [gdavis@ntcanon.org](mailto:gdavis@ntcanon.org)

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## Early Christian Authorities

[Ignatius of Antioch](#)

[Polycarp of Smyrna](#)

[Marcion](#)

[Valentinus](#)

[Justin Martyr](#)

[Irenaeus of Lyons](#)

[Clement of Alexandria](#)

[Tertullian of Carthage](#)

[Muratorian Canon](#)

[Origen](#)

[Eusebius of Caesarea](#)

[codex Sinaiticus](#)

[Athanasius of](#)

[Alexandria](#)

[Didymus the Blind](#)

[Peshitta](#)

[Vulgate](#)

## Early Christian Authorities

An early Christian authority is included in this survey if he or it gives important evidence on the development of the canon of the New Testament (perhaps even having some influence on it) and did so before ~400 CE, when the first complete manuscripts of the [Vulgate](#) were issued. The early 'authorities' fall into these categories:

- early Church fathers (Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Didymus the Blind)
- early heretics and their followers (Marcion and Marcionites, Valentinus and the Valentinians)
- lists of canonical books (Muratorian Canon, Athanasius' Festal Epistle)
- a single manuscript collection (codex Sinaiticus)
- series of manuscripts (Peshitta, Vulgate)

Authority	Date CE	Form of evidence provided on the development of the canon of the New Testament
<a href="#">Ignatius of Antioch</a>	~110	7 letters with quotations and allusions to Christian writings as scripture. There are no citations by name.
<a href="#">Polycarp of Smyrna</a>	~110	1 letter with ~100 quotations and allusions to Christian writings as scripture. There are no citations by name.

<a href="#">Marcion</a>	~140	founded a sect with its own "New Testament" collection. There was one Gospel, based mostly on the Gospel according to Luke
<a href="#">Valentinus</a>	140-150	Valentinus and his followers - Heracleon, Ptolemy, Marcus - were Gnostic heretics so their doctrines mostly survive in the writings of the orthodox, such as <a href="#">Irenaeus</a> , who summarized the Valentinian views before attacking them. The <a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a> from Nag Hammadi probably derives from the Valentinians, but this is not certain.
<a href="#">Justin Martyr</a>	150-160	many of his writings survive; he was the most prolific Christian writer up to his time.
<a href="#">Irenaeus</a>	~180	two of his writings survive in translations (Latin and Armenian). There are quotations and allusions to Christian writings as scripture, and citations by name.
<a href="#">Clement</a>	180-200	many of his writings survive; in them are about 8000 citations - over 1/3 of them from pagan sources. There are citations by name.
<a href="#">Tertullian</a>	200-210	Tertullian was the most prolific writer of the Latin Fathers in pre-Nicene times (before 325 CE). There are citations by name.
<a href="#">Muratorian Canon</a>	200-300	a manuscript discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan with a catalogue (in Latin) of the New Testament writings with comments
<a href="#">Origen</a>	220-350	only a small part of his works survives, but this fills volumes There are citations by name.



<a href="#">Eusebius</a>	300-330	much of the works of Eusebius survives, but here we only use his famous classification in <a href="#">[Eusebius]</a>
<a href="#">codex Sinaiticus</a>	~350	a manuscript discovered in 1859 containing a 4th-century New Testament
<a href="#">Athanasius</a>	~367	his 39th Festal Epistle of 367 CE has a list of canonical books
<a href="#">Didymus the Blind</a>	350-398	some of his exegetical writings have survived, including six commentaries discovered in 1941
<a href="#">Peshitta</a>	~400	a series of manuscripts of the Bible in Syriac including 22 New Testament books
<a href="#">Vulgate</a>	~400	a series of manuscripts (over 10,000) of the Bible in Latin, whose New Testament coincides (more or less) with the present one

For a summary of the authorities' opinions on New Testament writings, see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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Pages created by Glenn Davis, 1997-2004.

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## [Apocryphal New Testament Writings](#)

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- [Gospel of Truth](#)
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- [Gospel of the Hebrews](#)
- [Gospel of Matthias](#)
- [Traditions of Matthias](#)
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- [Acts of John](#)
- [Epistle to the Laodiceans](#)
- [I Clement](#)
- [Epistle of Barnabas](#)
- [Didache](#)
- [Shepherd of Hermas](#)
- [Apocalypse of Peter](#)

## Apocryphal New Testament Writings

An early Christian writings is considered in this survey if it is mentioned by name, or quoted from in a "scriptural" context by one of the [Early Christian Authorities](#). For a visual summary of the opinions of the writings see the [Cross Reference Table](#). Here is a summary of information on the 19 writings included:

Writing	Date CE	Place	Manuscripts	English Translation(s)
<a href="#">Gospel of Thomas</a>	~150	eastern Syria	Codex II Nag Hammadi (Coptic, Sahidic dialect) Oxyrhynchus Papyrus I (Greek) Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654 (Greek) Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 655	<a href="#">[Robinson]</a> pp. 126-138 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 135-147 <a href="#">Alexander Walker Esq.</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">Stephen Patterson and Marvin Meyer Thomas O. Lambdin Lambdin and Layton W. R. Schoedel Stuart D. Shoemaker Paterson Brown K. C. Hanson</a>

			(Greek)	<a href="#">Berlin Working Group for Coptic Gnostic Writings Ecumenical Coptic Project Interlinear Coptic/English Interlinear Greek/English</a>
<a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a>	140-180	<a href="#">Rome</a> ?	Codex I Nag Hammadi (Coptic)	<a href="#">[Robinson]</a> pp. 40-51 <a href="#">Robert M. Grant</a> [Gnostic Society Library] <a href="#">Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae</a> [Gnostic Society Library]
<a href="#">Gospel of the Twelve</a>	2nd century	?	no surviving fragments	none
<a href="#">Gospel of Peter</a>	100-130	Syria?	<a href="#">Akhmîm Fragment</a> (Greek) fragment discovered at	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 1 pp. 223-226 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 135-147 <a href="#">M.R. James</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">Henry Barclay Swete</a> <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library]

			Oxyrhynchus (Greek)	<a href="#">Roberts-Donaldson</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">M.R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Raymond Brown</a> <a href="#">Andrew Bernhard</a> <a href="#">Sam Gibson</a>
<a href="#">Gospel of Basilides</a>	2nd century	?	no surviving fragments	none
<a href="#">Gospel of the Egyptians</a>	first half of 2nd century	Egypt?	fragments quoted by <a href="#">Clement</a> , Hippolytus, and Epiphanius	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 1 pp. 209-212 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 17-19 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings]
<a href="#">Gospel of the Hebrews</a>	middle of 2nd century	Egypt	fragments quoted by Cyril of Jerusalem, <a href="#">Clement</a> , <a href="#">Origen</a> , and Jerome	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 1 pp. 177-178 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 9-10 <a href="#">M.R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Philipp Vielhauer and George Ogg</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Burton H. Throckmorton and Willis Barnstone</a> [Early Christian Writings]



<a href="#">Gospel of Matthias</a>	first half of 2nd century	<a href="#">Alexandria</a>	fragments quoted by <a href="#">Clement</a>	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 1 p. 383 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> p. 20
<a href="#">Traditions of Matthias</a>	"	"	"	"
<a href="#">Preaching of Peter</a>	100-120	Egypt	fragments quoted by <a href="#">Clement</a> and <a href="#">Origen</a>	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 2 pp. 37-40 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 21-24 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings]
<a href="#">Acts of Andrew</a>	150-200	?	<i>Liber de miraculis</i> by Gregory P. Utrech 1 (Coptic) Armenian Martyrdom 5 Greek recensions of final part Extracts handed down in Greek	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 2 pp. 118-151 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 245-302 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library]

<p><a href="#">Acts of Paul</a></p>	<p>185-195</p>	<p>Asia Minor</p>	<p>P. of the Hamburg ... (Greek) P. No. 1 in Heidelberg (Coptic) <i>Acta Pauli et Theclae</i> Corr. between Corinthians and Paul <i>Martyrium Pauli</i></p>	<p><a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 2 pp. 237-265 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 364-379 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library] <a href="#">??</a> [The Seraphim Files]</p>
<p><a href="#">Acts of John</a></p>	<p>2nd half of 2nd century</p>	<p>East Syria</p>	<p>large stock of Greek texts Greek P. Oxyrhynchus 850</p>	<p><a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 2 pp. 172-212 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 310-347 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library]</p>

<p><a href="#">Epistle to the Laodiceans</a></p>	<p>2nd-4th century</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>codex Fuldensis (Latin, 546 CE) + 100 other Vulgate manuscripts</p>	<p><a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 2 pp. 44-45 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> p. 546 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [The Seraphim Files]</p>
<p><a href="#">I Clement</a></p>	<p>95-96</p>	<p><a href="#">Rome</a></p>	<p>codex Alexandrinus (Greek) <a href="#">codex Hierosolymitanus</a> (Greek) 11th c. MS (Latin) 12th c. NT MS (Syriac) 4th c. MS (Coptic) 7th c. MS (Coptic)</p>	<p><a href="#">[LHH]</a> pp. 28-64 <a href="#">[Richardson]</a> pp. 43-73 <a href="#">J. B. Lightfoot</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Charles Hoole</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Roberts-Donaldson</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">J. B. Lightfoot</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library] <a href="#">??</a> [The Seraphim Files]</p>

<p><a href="#">Epistle of Barnabas</a></p>	<p>70-135</p>	<p><a href="#">Alexandria</a></p>	<p><a href="#">codex Sinaiticus</a>, 4th. c. (Greek) <a href="#">codex Hierosolymitanus</a> (Greek) 9 late related MSS (Greek) MS of unknown date (Latin)</p>	<p><a href="#">[LHH]</a> pp. 162-188 <a href="#">J. B. Lightfoot</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Charles Hoole</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Kirsopp Lake</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Roberts-Donaldson</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">J. B. Lightfoot</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library] <a href="#">??</a> [The Seraphim Files]</p>
				<p><a href="#">[LHH]</a> pp. 149-158 <a href="#">[Richardson]</a> pp. 171-179 <a href="#">J. B. Lightfoot</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Roberts-Donaldson</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Charles H. Hoole</a> [Early Christian</p>

<p><a href="#"><u>Didache</u></a></p>	<p>70-200</p>	<p>?</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>codex Hierosolymitanus</u></a> (Greek)</p>	<p>Writings] <a href="#"><u>Kirsopp Lake</u></a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#"><u>Ivan Lewis</u></a> [Ivan Lewis] <a href="#"><u>Ben H. Swett</u></a> [bswett.com] <a href="#"><u>J. B. Lightfoot</u></a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#"><u>??</u></a> [New Advent] <a href="#"><u>??</u></a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library] <a href="#"><u>J. B. Lightfoot</u></a> [The Seraphim Files] <a href="#"><u>Charles H. Hoole</u></a> [The Orthodox Christian Foundation]</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Shepherd of Hermas</u></a></p>	<p>90-175</p>	<p>Rome?</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>codex Sinaiticus</u></a>, 4th. c. (Greek) <a href="#"><u>codex Athous</u></a>, 14-15th c. (Greek) P. Michigan 129, 3rd c. (Greek) <a href="#"><u>Vulgate</u></a> translation (Latin) MS (Ethiopic)</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>[LHH]</u></a> pp. 194-290 <a href="#"><u>Roberts-Donaldson</u></a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#"><u>J. B. Lightfoot</u></a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#"><u>J. B. Lightfoot</u></a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#"><u>??</u></a> [New Advent] <a href="#"><u>F. Crombie</u></a> [Christian</p>



				Classics Ethereal Library] <a href="#">??</a> [The Seraphim Files]
<a href="#">Apocalypse of Peter</a>	~135	Egypt	Akhmîm Fragment (Greek) MS discovered in 1910 (Ethiopic)	<a href="#">[Schneemelcher]</a> v. 2 pp. 625-635 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 600- 612 <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">Roberts-</a> <a href="#">Donaldson</a> [Early Christian Writings] <a href="#">M. R. James</a> [Noncanonical Homepage] <a href="#">??</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">??</a> [Christian Classics Ethereal Library]

Four of the above writings -- I Clement, Epistle of Barnabas, Didache, Shepherd of Hermas -- are part of the collection called the [Apostolic Fathers](#). English translations of them can be found in other books in addition to [\[LHH\]](#). The other Apostolic Fathers are not in this survey because they were not mentioned in a scriptural context by any of the [Early Christian Authorities](#).

Two of the above writings - Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Truth - are part of the Nag Hammadi library. English translations of all these writings can be found in [\[Robinson\]](#). The other Nag Hammadi writings are not in this survey because they were not mentioned in a scriptural context by any of the [Early Christian Authorities](#).

There are other apocryphal New Testament writings that are not in the

scope of this survey because they were not mentioned by name by an early authority, or because any allusions or quotations were not sufficiently explicit, in my opinion. A writing almost included is *The Third Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. It was considered scripture by the Syrian Fathers - Aphraat (~340 CE) and Ephraem (d. 373 CE). Curiously, it forms part of the composite [Acts of Paul](#), but neither writing was included in the Syrian Church's version of the Bible - the [Peshitta](#). Some other examples are: *The Protoevangelium of James*, *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, *The Acts of Peter*, *The Letters of Christ and Abgar*, *The Apocalypse of Paul*, etc. For much longer lists see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) , [\[Elliot\]](#), the [Noncanonical Homepage](#), and [Early Christian Writings](#).

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## Cross Reference Table: Writings and Authorities

Each symbol in the large table below corresponds to a specific authority and a specific writing. The symbols summarize the opinion of the authority about the writing. If the symbol is blue, select it with the mouse to jump to the evidence. The symbols have this meaning:

### Symbol Opinion of Authority

- ✓ accepted; true; scriptural; or quoted from very approvingly
- ✓ possible approving quotation or allusion
- ✗ acceptable, but only with changes
- ? dubious; disputed; or useful for inspiration
- ✗ spurious (in the classification of Eusebius)
- ✗ false; heretical; heterodox; quoted from very disapprovingly
- not mentioned or quoted from; opinion unknown

	<a href="#">Ig</a>	<a href="#">Po</a>	<a href="#">M</a>	<a href="#">Va</a>	<a href="#">JM</a>	<a href="#">Ir</a>	<a href="#">C</a>	<a href="#">T</a>	<a href="#">MC</a>	<a href="#">O</a>	<a href="#">E</a>	<a href="#">CS</a>	<a href="#">A</a>	<a href="#">D</a>	<a href="#">P</a>	<a href="#">V</a>
<a href="#">Gospel according to Matthew</a>	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Gospel according to Mark</a>	·	✓	·	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Gospel according to Luke</a>	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Gospel according to John</a>	·	·	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Acts</a>	✓	✓	✗	·	·	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<a href="#">Romans</a>	✓	✓	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">I Corinthians</a>	✓	✓	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">II Corinthians</a>	•	✓	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Galatians</a>	•	✓	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Ephesians</a>	✓	✓	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Philippians</a>	•	✓	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Colossians</a>	✓	•	✗	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">I Thessalonians</a>	✓	✓	✗	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">II Thessalonians</a>	•	✓	✗	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">I Timothy</a>	•	✓	✗	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">II Timothy</a>	•	✓	✗	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Titus</a>	•	•	✗	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Philemon</a>	•	•	✗	•	•	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓
<a href="#">Hebrews</a>	•	✓	•	•	•	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">James</a>	•	•	•	•	•	✓	•	•	•	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">I Peter</a>	•	✓	•	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">II Peter</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	?	?	✓	✓	✓	•	✓
<a href="#">I John</a>	•	✓	•	✓	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">II John</a>	•	•	•	•	•	✓	•	•	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✗	•	✓
<a href="#">III John</a>	•	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	?	?	✓	✓	✗	•	✓
<a href="#">Jude</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	•	✓
<a href="#">Revelation of John</a>	•	•	•	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•	✓
<a href="#">Gospel of Thomas</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	✗	✗	•	•	•	•	•
<a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a>	•	•	•	✓	•	✗	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<a href="#">Gospel of the Twelve</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	✗	•	•	•	•	•	•
<a href="#">Gospel of Peter</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	?	✗	•	•	•	•	•
<a href="#">Gospel of Basilides</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	✗	✗	•	•	•	•	•	•

<a href="#">Gospel of the Egyptians</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓	.	.	×	.	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Gospel of the Hebrews</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓	.	.	?	×	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Gospel of Matthias</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	×	×	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Traditions of Matthias</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Preaching of Peter</a>	.	.	.	✓	.	.	✓	.	.	×	.	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Acts of Andrew</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	×	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Acts of Paul</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	×	.	?	×	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Acts of John</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	×	.	.	.	.	.
<a href="#">Epistle to the Laodiceans</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	?	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓
<a href="#">I Clement</a>	.	.	.	.	.	✓	✓	.	.	?	.	.	.	✓	.	.
<a href="#">Epistle of Barnabas</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓	.	.	?	×	✓	.	✓	.	.
<a href="#">Didache</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓	.	.	?	×	.	?	✓	.	.
<a href="#">Shepherd of Hermas</a>	.	.	.	.	.	✓	✓	?	?	?	×	✓	?	✓	.	.
<a href="#">Apocalypse of Peter</a>	.	.	.	.	.	.	✓	.	✓	.	×	.	.	.	.	.
	<u>Ig</u>	<u>Po</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>Va</u>	<u>JM</u>	<u>Ir</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>MC</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>CS</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>V</u>



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The following lists are taken directly from [\[Metzger\]](#) and [\[Schneemelcher\]](#).

<a href="#">Catalogue inserted in codex Claromontanus</a>	4th century?
<a href="#">The Canon of Cyril of Jerusalem</a>	~350 CE
<a href="#">The Cheltenham Canon</a>	~360 CE
<a href="#">The Canon approved by the Synod of Laodicea</a>	~363 CE ?
<a href="#">The Canon approved by the 'Apostolic Canons'</a>	~385 CE
<a href="#">The canon of Gregory of Nazianus</a>	329-389 CE
<a href="#">The canon of Amphilochius of Iconium</a>	died after 394 CE
<a href="#">The Canon approved by the Third Synod of Carthage</a>	~397 CE
<a href="#">The Decretum Gelasianum</a>	6th century

[Catalogue of the Sixty  
Canonical Books](#)

7th century

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9th century ?

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[Alexandria, Egypt](#)

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[Lyons, Gaul](#)

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[Map of the Spread of Christianity](#)

## Places in Early Christianity

This table summarizes a few of the important places, and their important witnesses, in the development of the canon of the New Testament:

West	Witnesses	East	Witnesses
Carthage	<a href="#">Tertullian</a>	<a href="#">Alexandria</a>	<a href="#">Clement</a> <a href="#">Origen</a> <a href="#">Didymus the Blind</a>
<a href="#">Rome</a>	<a href="#">Marcion</a> <a href="#">Valentinus</a> <a href="#">Justin Martyr</a>	<a href="#">Antioch</a>	<a href="#">Ignatius</a> <a href="#">Athanasius</a>
<a href="#">Lyons</a>	<a href="#">Irenaeus</a>	<a href="#">Edessa</a>	Tatian

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## Miscellaneous

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[codex Hierosolymitanus](#)

[Bibles of Constantine](#)

[Closing the Canon in the West](#)

[Closing the Canon in the East](#)

[The New Testament Books](#)

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## [For More Information](#)

[References](#)

[Links to Other Sites](#)

If you want to learn more, please investigate the links [References](#) and [Links to Other Sites](#), that appear in the left margin.

And please allow me to repeat, from the home page, my most highly recommended books:

Metzger, Bruce M.

[\*The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance.\*](#)

Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1987.  
ISBN: 0198269544

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, ed.

[\*New Testament Apocrypha, 6th edition.\*](#) 2 Vols.

Westminster/John Knox Press.  
Louisville. 1989.

ISBN: 0664218784 and ISBN:  
0664218792

If you find my survey interesting, and want to explore this subject further, please go out and buy them. Both are available at [Amazon Books](#) and [Christian Book Distributors](#).

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## Catalogue inserted in Codex Claromontanus

In the 6th century codex Claromontanus (**D**), a Greek and Latin manuscript of the Pauline epistles, someone placed between Philemon and Hebrews a Latin list of the books of the Bible. Zahn and Harnack were of the opinion that the list had been draw up originally in Greek at Alexandria or its neighborhood ~300 CE. According to Jülicher the list belongs to the 4th century and is probably of western origin.

[An Old Testament list is followed by:]

### Four Gospels:

Matthew	2600 lines
John	2000 lines
Mark	1600 lines
Luke	2900 lines

### Epistles of Paul:

To the Romans	1040 lines
The First to the Corinthians	1060 lines
The Second to the Corinthians	70 ( <i>sic</i> ) lines
To the Galatians	350 lines
To the Ephesians	365 lines

*[three lines seem to have  
fallen out  
here; Philippians, I  
Thessalonians  
and II Thessalonians are  
missing]*

The First to Timothy	209 lines
The Second to Timothy	289 lines
To Titus	140 lines
To the Colossians	251 lines
To Philemon	50 lines
– The First to ( <i>sic</i> ) Peter	200 lines
The Second to ( <i>sic</i> ) Peter	140 lines
Of James	220
The First Epistle of John	220
The Second Epistle of John	20
The Third Epistle of John	20
The Epistle of Jude	60 lines
– <a href="#">Epistle of Barnabas</a>	850 lines
The Revelation of John	1200
The Acts of the Apostles	2600
– The <a href="#">Shepherd</a>	4000 lines
– The <a href="#">Acts of Paul</a>	3650 lines
– The <a href="#">Apocalypse of Peter</a>	270

The last four dashes identify works of doubtful or disputed canonicity. The dash before I Peter may be only *paragraphus*, or Greek paragraph mark, to suggest that I Peter and the items that follow are not part of the Pauline Epistles.

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## The Canon of Cyril of Jerusalem

The chief surviving work of Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 CE), his *Catechetical Lectures*, were instructions for catechumens as Lenten preparation prior to undergoing baptism on Holy Saturday. They were delivered mostly in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built by Constantine, and were published from shorthand notes taken down by a member of the congregation. The lectures contain a list of the books of both Old and New Testaments. It is noteworthy that the Revelation of John is not included; such is the state of things at Jerusalem by the middle of the 4th century.

From Cyril's *Catechetical Lectures*:

Then of the New Testament there are four Gospels only, for the rest have false titles and are harmful. The Manicheans also wrote a [Gospel according to Thomas](#), which being smeared with the fragrance of the name 'Gospel' destroys the souls of those who are rather simple-minded. Receive also the Acts of the Twelve Apostles; and in addition to these the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude; and as a seal upon them all, and the latest work of disciples, the fourteen Epistles of Paul. But let all the rest be put aside in a secondary rank. And whatever books are not read in the churches, do not read

these even by yourself, as you have already heard [me say concerning the Old Testament apocrypha]. (4.36)

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## The Cheltenham Canon

This Latin list was discovered by the German classical scholar Theodor Mommsen (published 1886) in a 10th century manuscript (chiefly patristic) belonging to the library of Thomas Phillips at Cheltenham, England. The list probably originated in North Africa soon after the middle of the 4th century.

[An Old Testament list is followed by:]

Likewise the catalogue of the New Testament:

Four Gospels: Matthew, 2700 lines

Mark, 1700 lines

John, 1800 lines

Luke, 3300 lines

All the lines make 10,000 lines

Epistles of Paul, 13 in number

The Acts of the Apostles, 3600 lines

The Apocalypse, 1800 lines

Three Epistles of John, 350 lines  
one only

Two Epistles of Peter, 300 lines  
one only

Since the index of lines [= stichometry] in the city of Rome is not clearly given, and elsewhere too through avarice for gain they do not preserve it in full, I have

gone through the books singly, counting sixteen syllables to the line, and have appended to every book the number of Virgilian hexameters.

Note the two enigmatic lines containing 'one only' (*una sola*). What does 'one only' mean? Harnack's suggestion, adopted by Jülicher, is exceedingly improbable - that the first 'one only' refers to the Epistle of James, and the second one to the Epistle of Jude. This would be a most unusual way in which to bring the scriptural character of these books to the attention of the reader.

The words look like the expression of two opinions on the list. The writer appears to have been of reactionary opinions, for he omits Hebrews and Jude as well as James. As to the notation of the Johannine and Petrine Epistles, the explanation is probably as follows. The writer copied the first and third lines from some earlier list, but he himself thought that only I John and I Peter were Scripture, and therefore added in each case 'one only'. Why did he then write 'Three Epistles of John' and 'Two Epistles of Peter'. The reason lay in the number of stichoi lines, binding I, II, and III John together as a unit, and I and II Peter as a unit. Since he could not tell precisely how many stichoi were to be subtracted if he omitted II and III John and II Peter, he was, so to speak, forced to copy the lines preceding 'one only' as units. But by adding the words 'one only' he was able to express his own opinion that the shorter Epistles were not to be reckoned as canonical.

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## **The Canon approved by the Synod of Laodicea (~363 CE)**

A synod held about 363 in Laodicea took some action regarding the canon, but its precise decision is unknown to us. At the close of the decrees (or 'canons' as such decrees were commonly called) issued by the thirty or so clerics in attendance, we read (Canon 59) that only canonical books should be read in the church. Thus far the decree is found in all accounts of the synod with but trifling variations. In the later manuscripts, however this is followed by a list of books (Canon 60). The New Testament list is the same as the present one, except for the Revelation of John:

Canon 59. Let no private psalms nor any uncanonical books be read in the church, but only the canonical ones of the New and Old Testament.

Canon 60. [After listing the books of the Old Testament] And these are the books of the New Testament: four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles, seven Catholic epistles, namely, one of James, two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude, fourteen epistles of Paul, one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, one to the



Hebrews, two to Timothy, one to Titus,  
and one to Philemon.

Since the list is also omitted in most of the Latin and Syriac versions of the decrees, most scholars consider them to have been added to the report sometime after 363. Probably some later editor of the report felt that the books which might be read should be named. In any case, it is clear that the Synod of Laodicea attempted no new legislation. The decree adopted at this gathering merely recognizes the fact that there are already in existence certain books, generally recognized as suitable to be read in the public worship of the churches, which are known as the 'canonical' books. If the catalogues are genuine, they simply give the names of these books, already received as authoritative in the churches that were represented at the synod.

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## The Canon approved by the 'Apostolic Canons' (~380 CE)

A series of 85 Canons (decrees) attributed to the apostles was compiled in the late 4th century by the redactor of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This is the concluding Canon of the Latin version:

Canon 85. Let the following books be esteemed venerable and holy by all of you, both clergy and laity. [A list of books of the Old Testament ...] And our sacred books, that is, of the New Testament, are the four Gospels, of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the fourteen Epistles of Paul; two Epistles of Peter; three of John; one of James; one of Jude; two Epistles of Clement; and the Constitutions dedicated to you, the bishops, by me, Clement, in eight books, which is not appropriate to make public before all, because of the mysteries contained in them; and the Acts of us, the Apostles.

Note the omission of the Revelation of John and the addition of the two epistles of Clement.

In the Coptic translation, the Revelation of John follows Jude, and the word 'Clement' is followed by the clause *etetneoshou hi bol*, the significance of which has puzzled scholars. Tatam translated it as 'which you

shall read out of', and Lightfoot translates it 'which ye shall read aloud'. Perhaps best is the translation of Guidi -- 'from which you are to read, outside' -- and to understand that the two Epistles of Clement, though outside the canon, may nevertheless be read.

Manuscripts of the Arabic version (probably made in Egypt) also have differences. Three manuscripts, dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, make no mention of the Epistles of Clement (omitting the puzzling clause too). In other manuscripts, following the mention of 'the Apocalypse, vision of John', the list concludes with 'the two Epistles of Clement in one book'.

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## **The Canon of Gregory of Nazianus (329-389 CE)**

The distinguished theologian and contemporary of [Athanasius](#), Gregory of Nazianus, toward the end of his life drew up in verse (perhaps as an aid to the memory of his readers) a catalogue of the Biblical books. It is in iambic verse, the lineation of which (but not the rhythm) is preserved.

[List of books of the Old Testament ...]

But now count also [the books] of the New Mystery;

Matthew indeed wrote for the Hebrews the wonderful works of Christ,

And mark for Italy, Luke for Greece,

John, the great preacher, for all, walking in heaven.

Then the Acts of the wise apostles,

And fourteen Epistles of Paul,

And seven Catholic [Epistles], of which James is one,

Two of Peter, three of John again.

And Jude's is the seventh, You have all.

If there is any besides these, it is not

among the genuine [books].

Concerning the Old Testament, he agrees with Athanasius, but concerning the New Testament he differs by placing the Catholic Epistles after the Pauline Epistles and, more significantly, in omitting the Revelation of John. However, Gregory knows of

existence of the Revelation of John, and on rare occasions in his other works he quotes from it.

The list was ratified by the Trullan Synod in 692 CE.

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## The Canon of Amphilochius of Iconium (after 394 CE)

A list of Biblical books is included in a poem that is generally attributed to Amphilochius, a Cappadocian by birth, a lawyer, and then bishop of Iconium in Lycaonia. The poem, entitled *Iambics for Seleucus*, instructs Seleucus how to follow a life of study and virtue, and urges him to apply himself to the Scriptures more than any other writing.

[List of books of the Old Testament ...]

It is time for me to speak of the books of the New Testament.

Receive only four evangelists:

Matthew, then Mark, to whom, having added Luke

As third, count John as fourth in time,

But first in height of teachings,

For I call this one rightly a son of

thunder,

Sounding out most greatly with the word of God.

And receive also the second book of Luke,

That of the catholic Acts of the Apostles.

Add next the chosen vessel,

The herald of the Gentiles, the apostle

Paul, having written wisely to the churches

Twice seven Epistles: to the Romans one,

To which one must add two to the

Corinthians,  
That to the Galatians, and that to the  
Ephesians, after which  
That in Philippi, then the one written  
To the Colassians, two to the  
Thessalonians,  
Two to Timothy, and to Titus and the  
Philemon,  
One each, and one to the Hebrews.  
But some say the one to the Hebrews is  
spurious,  
not saying well, for the grace is genuine.  
Well, what remains? Of the Catholic  
Epistles  
Some say we must receive seven, but  
others say  
Only three should be received -- that of  
James, one,  
And one of Peter, and those of John, one.  
And some receive three [of John], and  
besides these, two  
of Peter, and that of Jude a seventh.  
And again the Revelation of John,  
Some approve, but the most  
Say it is spurious, This is  
Perhaps the most reliable (lit. most  
unfalsified)  
canon of the divinely inspired Scriptures.

Amphilochius reports some of the earlier debate concerning Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation of John. In fact, not only does he report the doubts of others concerning these books, but he himself appears to reject II Peter, II and III John, and Jude, and almost certainly rejects Revelation of John. The most curious feature is that, having thus stated doubts as to the right of several books to be included in the sacred collection, the author ends with the incredible phrase:

This is perhaps the most reliable canon of  
the divinely inspired Scriptures.

The presence of the word 'canon' is scarcely more

noteworthy than the hypothetical form of the sentence as a whole. In other words, here we have a bishop in Asia Minor, and yet he seems to be uncertain as to the exact extent of the canon!

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## **The Canon approved by the third Synod of Carthage (397 CE)**

The first council that accepted the present New Testament canon was the Synod of Hippo Regius in North Africa (393 CE); however, the acts of the council are lost. A brief summary of the acts was read at and accepted by the third Synod of Carthage.

Canon 24. Besides the canonical Scriptures, nothing shall be read in church under the name of divine Scriptures. Moreover, the canonical Scriptures are these: [then follows a list of Old Testament books]. The [books of the] New Testament: the Gospels, four books; the Acts of the Apostles, one book; the Epistles of Paul, thirteen; of the same to the Hebrews; one Epistle; of Peter, two; of John, apostle, three; of James, one; of Jude, one; the Revelation of John. Concerning the confirmation of this canon, the transmarine Church shall be consulted. On the anniversaries of martyrs, their acts shall also be read.

Note that Hebrews is listed separately from the other 13 epistles.

According to Zahn, in 419 another Synod held at Carthage gave the concluding words in the following form:

... Fourteen Epistles of Paul ..... the Revelation of John, one book. Let this be sent to our brother and fellow-bishop, Boniface [of Rome], and to the other bishops of those parts, that they may confirm this canon, for these are the things that we have received from our fathers to be read in church.

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## The Decretum Gelasianum

The so-called *Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*, is traditionally attributed to Gelasius, bishop of Rome 492-496 CE. However, upon the whole it is probably of South Gallic origin (6th century), but several parts can be traced back to Pope Damasus and reflect Roman tradition. The 2nd part is a canon catalogue, and the 5th part is a catalogue of the 'apocrypha' and other writings which are to be rejected. The canon catalogue gives all 27 books of the New Testament. Parts 1, 3, and 4 are not relevant to the canon, but a complete [Latin edition](#) and a complete [English translation](#) are available.

### Part 2 -- A catalogue of the canon.

Likewise it was said:

Now indeed the issue of the divine scriptures must be discussed, which the universal Catholic church receives or which it is required to avoid.

#### 1. THIS IS THE ORDER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Genesis	one book
Exodus	one book

Leviticus	one book
Numbers	one book
Deuteronomy	one book
Joshua	one book
Judges	one book
Ruth	one book
Kings	four books
Chronicles	two books
150 Psalms	one book
Three books of Solomon	
proverbs	one book
ecclesiastes	one book
song of songs	one book
The same of Wisdom	one book
ecclesiasticus	one book

**2. LIKEWISE THE ORDER OF THE  
PROPHETS:**

Isaiah	one book
Jeremiah	one book

with Cinoth  
i.e. his  
lamentations

Ezechiel	one book
Daniel	one book
Hosea	one book
Amos	one book
Micah	one book
Joel	one book
Obadiah	one book
Jonah	one book
Nahum	one book
Habbakuk	one book
Zephaniah	one book
Haggai	one book
Zechariah	one book
Malachi	one book

**3. LIKewise THE ORDER OF THE HISTORIES:**

Job	one book
Tobit	one book
Esdras	two books
Ester	one book
Judith	one book
Maccabees	two books

**4. LIKewise THE ORDER OF THE SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT which the holy and catholic Roman church upholds and is venerated:**

Four books of the Gospels

according to Mathew	one book
according to Mark	one book
according to Luke	one book
according to John	one book
Likewise the acts of the apostles	one book
The letters of the apostle Paul in number fourteen	
to the Romans	one letter
to the Corinthians	one letter
to the Ephesians	one letter
to the Thesalonians	two letters
to the Galatians	one letter
to the Philippians	one letter
to the Colossians	one letter

to Timothy two  
letters

to Titus one  
letter

to the  
Philemon one  
letter

to the  
Hebrews one  
letter

Likewise the apocalypse of one  
John book

Likewise the canonical  
letters in number seven

of the apostle Peter two  
letters

of the apostle James one  
letter

of the apostle John one  
letter

of the other John the elder two  
letters

of the apostle Judas the  
Zealot one  
letter

HERE ENDS THE CANON OF THE NEW  
TESTAMENT.

### **Part 5 -- A catalogue of the 'apocrypha' and other writings which are to be rejected.**

The remaining writings which have been  
compiled or been recognized by heretics  
or schismatics the Catholic and Apostolic  
Roman Church does not in any way  
receive; of these we have thought it right

to cite below some which have been handed down and which are to be avoided by catholics.

*Further Enumeration of Apocryphal Books:*

In the first place we confess that the Synod at Ariminum which was convened by the emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine, through the prefect Taurus is damned from then and now and forever.

Itinerary (book of travels) under the name of the apostle Peter, apocryphal which is called The Nine Books of the holy Clement

[Acts under the name of the apostle Andrew](#) apocryphal

Acts under the name of the apostle Thomas apocryphal

Acts under the name of the apostle Peter apocryphal

Acts under the name of the apostle Philip apocryphal

[Gospel under the name of Matthias](#) apocryphal



Gospel under  
the name of Barnabas apocryphal

Gospel under  
the name of James the  
younger apocryphal

[Gospel under  
the name of the  
apostle Peter](#) apocryphal

[Gospel under  
the name of  
Thomas](#), which the Manicheans  
use apocryphal

Gospel under  
the name of Bartholomaeus apocryphal

Gospel under  
the name of Andrew apocryphal

Gospel which  
Lucian has forged apocryphal

Gospel which  
Hesychius has forged apocryphal

Book about the  
childhood of the Redeemer apocryphal

Book about the  
birth of the Redeemer and  
about Mary or the midwife apocryphal

Book which is called by the name of the [Shepherd](#) apocryphal

All books which Leucius, the disciple of the devil, has made apocryphal

Book which is called The Foundation apocryphal

Book which is called The Treasure apocryphal

Book about the daughters of Adam: Leptogenesis(?) apocryphal

Cento about Christ, put together in Virgilian lines apocryphal

Book which is called the [Acts of Thecla and of Paul](#) apocryphal

Book which is ascribed to Nepos apocryphal

Book of the Sayings, compiled by heretics and denoted by the name of Sixtus apocryphal

Revelation  
which is  
ascribed to  
Paul apocryphal

Revelation  
which is  
ascribed to  
Thomas apocryphal

Revelation  
which is  
ascribed to  
Stephen apocryphal

Book which is  
called the  
Home-going of  
the Holy Mary apocryphal

Book which is  
called the  
Penitence of  
Adam apocryphal

Book about the  
giant Ogias,  
of whom the  
heretics assert  
that after the  
flood he fought  
with the dragon apocryphal

Book which is  
called The  
Testament of  
Job apocryphal

Book which is  
called The  
Penitence of  
[Origen](#) apocryphal

Book which is called The Penitence of the Holy Cyprian apocryphal

Book which is called The Penitence of Jamnes and Mambres apocryphal

Book which is called The Portion of the Apostles apocryphal

Book which is called The Grave-plate(?) of the Apostles apocryphal

Book which is called the Canones of the Apostles apocryphal

The book Physiologus, compiled by heretics and called by the name of the blessed Ambrose apocryphal

The History of Eusebius Pamphili apocryphal

Works of [Tertullian](#) apocryphal

Works of  
Lactantius  
(*later addition:*  
or of Firmianus  
or of the  
African) apocryphal

Works of  
Postumianus  
and of Gallus apocryphal

Works of  
[Montanus](#), of  
Priscilla and of  
Maximilla apocryphal

Works of  
Faustus the  
Manichean apocryphal

Works of  
Commodianus apocryphal

Works of the  
other [Clement  
of Alexandria](#) apocryphal

Works of  
Thascius  
Cyprian apocryphal

Works of  
Arnobius apocryphal

Works of  
Tichonius apocryphal

Works of  
Cassian, a  
presbyter in  
Gaul apocryphal

Works of  
Victorinus of  
Pettau apocryphal

Works of  
Faustus of Riez apocryphal  
in Gaul

Works of  
Fruventius apocryphal  
Caecus

Epistle of Jesus  
to Abgar apocryphal

Epistle of  
Abgar to Jesus apocryphal

Passion  
(Martyr Acts)  
of Cyricus and  
of Iulitta apocryphal

Passion of  
Georgius apocryphal

Writing which  
is called  
Interdiction apocryphal  
(Exorcism?) of  
Solomon

All amulets  
which have  
been compiled  
not, as those  
persons feign, apocryphal  
in the name of  
the angels, but  
rather in that of  
the demons

These and the like, what Simon Magus,  
Nicolaus, Cerinthus, Marcion, Basilides,  
Ebion, Paul of Samosata, Photinus and  
Bonosus, who suffered from similar  
error, also Montanus with his detestable  
followers, Apollinaris, Valentinus the  
Manichean, Faustus the African,  
Sabellius, Arius, Macedonius, Eunomius,

Novatus, Sabbatius, Calistu, Donatus, Eustatius, Iovianus, Pelagius, Iulianus of Eclanum, Caelestius, Maximian, Priscillian from Spain, Nestorius of Constantinople, Maximus the Cynic, Lampetius, Dioscorus, Eutyches, Peter and the other Peter, of whom the one besmirched Alexandria and the other Antioch, Acacius of Constantinople with his associates, and what also all disciples of heresy and of the heretics or schismatics, whose names we have scarcely preserved, have taught or compiled, we acknowledge is to be not merely rejected but excluded from the whole Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church and with its authors and the adherents of its authors to damned in the inextricable shackles of anathema for ever.

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## Catalogue of the Sixty Canonical Books (7th century)

This list, which probably originated in the 7th century, and is transmitted in several manuscripts, reflects the view, widely held in the Greek Church at a later time, of the canon of 60 books (34 OT and 26 NT). There are only 26 NT books because the Revelation of John is missing. After the enumeration of the canonical books, there follows that of the writings 'outside the sixty' and the 'apocrypha'.

And the following (writings) outside the sixty

1. The Wisdom of Solomon
2. The Wisdom of Sirach
3. Maccabees (I)
4. Maccabees (II)
5. Maccabees (II)
6. Maccabees (IV)
7. Esther
8. Judith
9. Tobit

And the following apocryphal (writings)

1. Adam
2. Enoch
3. Lamech
4. The Patriarchs
5. The Prayer of Joseph



6. Eldad and Modad
7. The Testament of Moses
8. The Assumption of Moses
9. The Psalms of Solomon
10. The Revelation of Elias
11. The Vision of Isaiah
12. The Revelation of Zephaniah
13. The Revelation of Zechariah
14. The Revelation of Ezra
15. The History of James
16. The [Revelation of Peter](#)
17. The Circuits and [Teachings of the Apostles](#)
18. The [Epistle of Barnabas](#)
19. The [Acts of Paul](#)
20. The Revelation of Paul
21. The Teaching of Clement
22. The Teaching of [Ignatius](#)
23. The Teaching of [Polycarp](#)
24. The Gospel according to Barnabas
25. The [Gospel according to Matthias](#)

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## The Stichometry of Nicephorus (9th century?)

Nicephorus (Patriarch of Constantinople 806-815) drew up a *Chronography* reaching from Adam to the year of his death (829), to which he appended a canon catalogue, the origin of which has not been clearly settled, but which may perhaps be located in Jerusalem. Whether it is older than 850 (so Jülicher) remains open to question. It is striking that in the enumeration of the NT books the Revelation of John is not present. The catalogue of the Old and New Testament books is followed by that of the antilegomena (which contains the Revelation of John) and of the apocrypha. Next to each book is the count of its *stichoi* (lines).

And the (writings) of the Old Testament which are gainsaid and are not recognized in the Church (canonized) are the following:

1. 3 Books of the Maccabees 7300 lines
2. The Wisdom of Solomon 1100 lines
3. The Wisdom of Jesus Sirach 2800 lines
4. The Psalms and Odes of Solomon 2100 lines
5. Esther 350 lines
6. Judith 1700 lines
7. Susanna 500 lines

8. Tobith, also (called) Tobias	700 lines
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And of the New Testament (writings) the following are gainsaid:

1. The Revelation of John	1400 lines
2. The <a href="#">Revelation of Peter</a>	300 lines
3. The <a href="#">Epistle of Barnabas</a>	1360 lines
4. The <a href="#">Gospel of the Hebrews</a>	2200 lines

Apocrypha of the Old Testament are the following:

1. Enoch	4800 lines
2. (Testaments of the) Patriarchs	5100 lines
3. The Prayer of Joseph	300 lines
4. The Testament of Moses	1100 lines
5. The Assumption of Moses	1400 lines
6. Abraham	300 lines
7. Eldad and Modad	400 lines
8. (Book of the) prophet Elias	316 lines
9. (Book of the) prophet Zephaniah	600 lines
10. (Book of the) Zacharias, the father of John	500 lines

## 11. Pseudepigraphica of Baruch, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Daniel

Apocrypha of the New Testament are the following:

1. The [Circuit of Paul](#) 3600 lines
2. The Circuit of Peter 2750 lines
3. The [Circuit of John](#) 2500 lines
4. The Circuit of Thomas 1600 lines
5. The [Gospel of Thomas](#) 1300 lines
6. The Teaching ([Didache](#))  
of the Apostles 200 lines
7. The 32 (books) of  
[Clement](#) 2600 lines
8. (Writings) of [Ignatius](#), of  
[Polycarp](#) and of [Hermas](#) ...

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## Alexandria, Egypt

Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE on the mouth of the Nile, was the metropolis of Egypt, destined to become one of the chief centers of Christianity, the rival of Antioch and Rome. Since the time of the first Ptolemies it boasted two great libraries of learning, the Museion and Serapeion.

At Alexandria the religious life of Palestine and the intellectual culture of Greece met and mingled, and prepared the way for what became the first school of Christian theology. Originally designed only for the practical purpose of preparing converts for baptism, the *catechetical school*<sup>#</sup> was under the supervision of the bishop. But in the city which was the home of Philonic theology, of Gnostic speculations, and of Neoplatonic philosophy, the school soon assumed a more learned character, and became, at the same time, a kind of theological seminary. It had at first but a single teacher, afterward two or more, but without fixed salary, or special buildings. The teachers gave their voluntary lectures in their homes, generally after the style of the ancient philosophers. The early heads of the school were:

Pantaenus                      ~180 - ~190 CE

[Clement](#)                        ~190 to 192

[Origen](#)                            193 to 215

[Didymus the Blind](#)            348 to 398

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## Antioch, Syria

Antioch was founded by Seleucus I Nicator, around 300 BCE near the Mediterranean in modern Turkey, as a center for military control and for the diffusion of Hellenic culture in Syria. It was the center of the Seleucid Kingdom until 64 BCE, when it was annexed by Rome and made the capital of the province of Syria.

Antioch was one of the earliest centers of Christianity; it was there (according to Acts 11:26 and ~40 CE) that the followers of Christ were first called Christians. It served as the headquarters for the missionary journeys of St. Paul (47-55). Other important writers from Antioch were:

<a href="#">Ignatius</a>	2nd or 3rd bishop of Antioch ~110 CE
Theophilus	6th bishop ~180 CE
Serapion	7th bishop ~200 CE

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## Edessa, Syria (modern Urfa, Turkey)

The town lies in the fertile plain of Haran, ringed by limestone hills on three sides. It controls the strategic pass to the south, through which runs a road from Anatolia to northern Mesopotamia, which has been used since antiquity. The town in the 2nd millennium BCE was probably the chief city of a Hurrian state destroyed by the Hittites in the 14th century. Traditions of its earliest foundation associate the site with the legendary king Nimrod, and Muslim legend associates the place with Abraham; a cave beneath Urfa's citadel is said to be Abrahams's birthplace.

The Aramaic name, Urhai, was changed to Edessa when it was refounded as a military settlement in the 3rd century BCE. Freeing itself from imposed Hellenism, Edessa, as capital of the principality of Osroëne, was one of the main centers of Syrian culture; it figured prominently in the conflicts between Parthia and Rome.

Christianity seems to have reached the Edessa and the Euphrates valley about the middle of the 2nd century, while the country was still an independent state. Since neither Latin nor Greek was understood, the native language Syriac (a Semitic language related to Aramaic) was used in Christian writings. The political fortunes of Edessa present a remarkable contrast to those of other centers of Christianity. Until 216 CE in the reign of the Emperor Caracalla, Edessa lay outside the Roman Empire. Since its people did not speak Greek, like their neighboring Syrians in [Antioch](#), it is not surprising that the Christianity of Edessa began to develop independently, without the admixture of Greek philosophy and Roman methods of government that at an early date modified primitive Christianity in the West and transformed it into the amalgam known as Catholicism.

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## Lyons, Gaul

At the time of Caesar, the settlement at Lyons was a village inhabited by fishermen and boatmen at a spot where the Saône narrowed. This early dwelling site bore the name of Condate. In 43 BCE Lucius Munatius Plancus, a former lieutenant of Caesar, founded a military colony, Lugdunum, on the nearby hill of Fourvière, overlooking the Rhône-Saône confluence. The Roman emperor Augustus subsequently made Lyons the capital of the Gauls, while his son-in-law, Agrippa, created a network of roads converging on the city.

In the 2nd century CE, Lyons was a cosmopolitan center of trade. The missionaries who established the church there, from which the Christian faith spread little by little to other parts of Gaul, had come from Asia Minor. Many of the members of the Lyons church bore Greek names. [Irenaeus](#), originally of Asia Minor and representing the Eastern tradition, was a living bond between Asia and Gaul. Furthermore, the church at Lyons used the Greek language, though the mother tongue of most of the population was a Celtic dialect.

During the early summer of 177 CE, feeling among the populace of Lyons gradually seethed up against the Christians. First they were banned from the baths and the market places; later they were excluded from all public places. Then, at a moment when the provincial governor was away from the city, the mob broke loose. Christians were assaulted, beaten, and stoned. After the governor had returned, a public trial of the Christians was ordered. The governor ordered the Roman citizens to be beheaded and the rest to be exposed to the beasts in the amphitheater.

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## Pepuza, Phrygia

Pepuza was the center of [Montanist](#) heretical movement, which believed the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21) was soon to descend on the Earth at the little town. The location of Pepuza has been sought by travelers in Asia Minor for nearly a hundred years. The most recent (1980) investigator, August Strobel, is convinced that it lay somewhere in or near the upland plain of Kirbasan south of Usak, north-west of Kinar, and a little to the north of the upper Mæander.

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## Rome, Italy

Rome was one of the earliest centers in Christianity. It is possible that the gospel was brought there when certain Jews, resident at Rome, returned from Jerusalem as Jewish-Christian believers following the preaching of Peter at the first Pentecost (Acts 2:10). However that may be, at any rate by the time that Paul was brought as a prisoner to Rome to be tried before Caesar, a considerable number of Christian believers were there, and Acts reports that a group of them came from the city about 40 miles to meet him at the Forum of Appius and at Three Taverns, two way-stations on the Appian Way (Acts 28:15).

By the 7th decade the number of believers in the metropolis had attracted the attention of the Emperor Nero, and Tacitus (Annals 15:44) refers to them as a 'huge multitude' who had suffered persecution. By the middle of the 2nd century the Christian Church was firmly established in Rome, and outposts had been planted still farther to the west in Gaul as well as across the Mediterranean in North Africa.

Important writers from Rome were:

[Marcion](#) ~140 - 150 CE

[Valentinus](#) gnostic ~140 - 150 CE

[Justin Martyr](#) apologist ~150 - 160 CE

Hippolytus bishop, the first antipope ~200 - 235 CE

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



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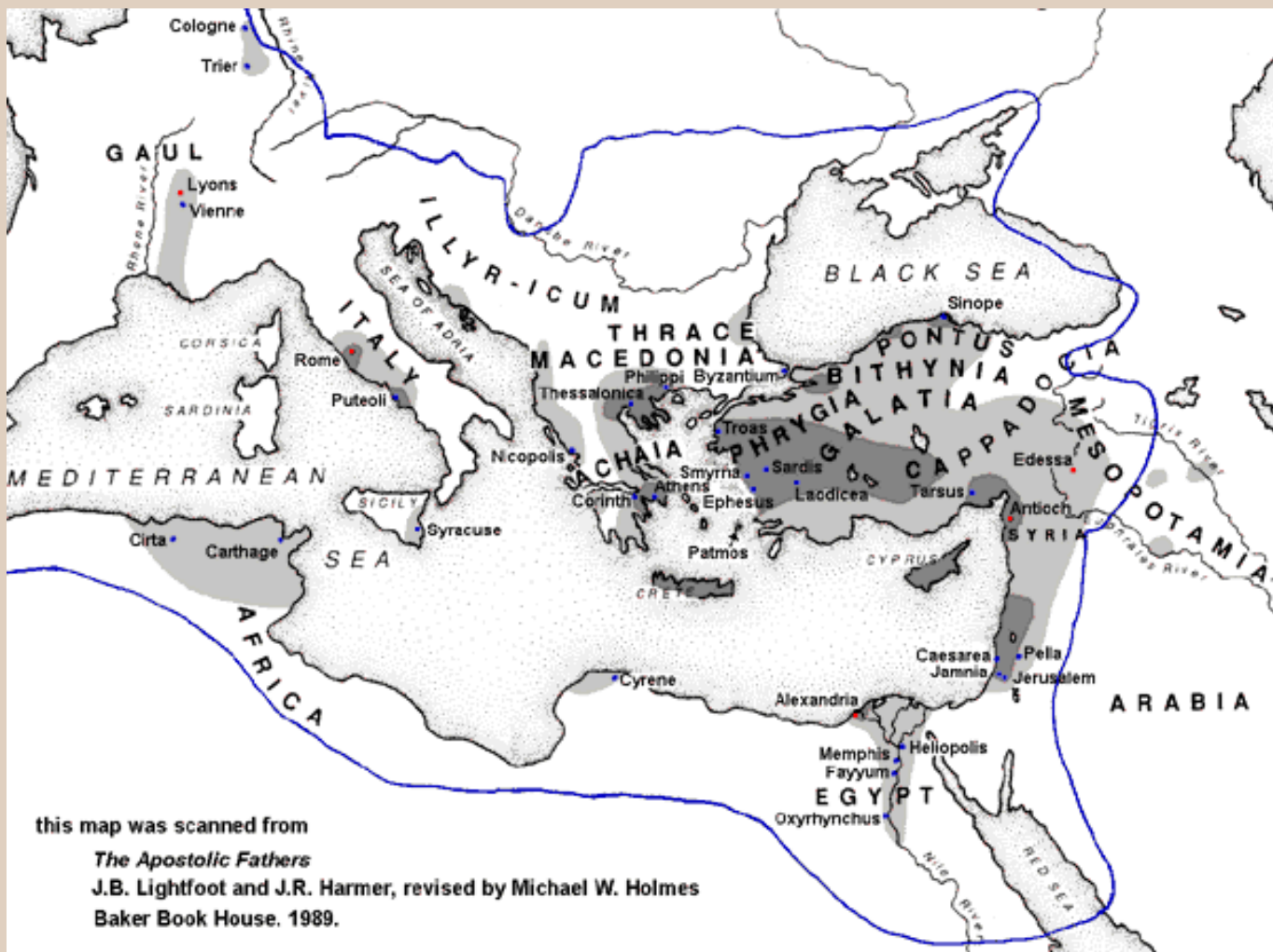
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-  Early centers of Christianity; with a link to more information
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## Tertullian of Carthage (Quintus Septimius Florens Terullianus)

(b. 155/160 Carthage - d. 220? CE)

Tertullian, an early Christian author and polemicist, helped to establish Latin -- rather than Greek, which was the most widely used language at that time -- as an ecclesiastical language and as a vehicle for Christian thought in the West. He coined many new theological words and phrases and gave currency to those already in use, thus becoming a significant thinker in forging and fixing the vocabulary and thought structure of Western Christianity for the next 1000 years. Because he was a moralist rather than a philosopher by temperament -- which probably precipitated his famous question: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem" -- Tertullian's practical and legal bent of mind expressed what would later be taken as the unique genius of Latin Christianity.

The life of Tertullian is based almost wholly on information written by men living over a century after him and from obscure references in his own works. On this basis a general outline of his life has been constructed, but most of the details have been continually disputed by modern scholars.

Tertullian was born in Carthage in the Roman province of Africa, present Tunisia, approximately 155-160 CE. Carthage at that time was second only to Rome as a cultural and educational center in the West, and Tertullian received an exceptional education in grammar, rhetoric, literature, philosophy, and law. Little is known of his early life. His parents were pagan, and his father may have been a centurion in an African-based legion assigned to the governor of the province. After completing his education in Carthage, he went to Rome, probably in his late teens or early 20s, to study further and perhaps begin work as a lawyer.

While in Rome, he became interested in the Christian movement, but not until he returned to Carthage toward the end of the 2nd century was he converted to the Christian faith. In his early works he indicated that he was impressed by certain Christian attitudes and beliefs: the courage and determination of martyrs, moral rigorism, and an uncompromising belief in one God. By the end of the 2nd century the church in Carthage had become large, firmly established, and well organized, and was rapidly becoming a powerful force in North Africa. By the year 225 there were approximately 70 bishops in Numidia and Proconsularis, the two provinces of Roman Africa. Tertullian emerged as a leading member of the African church, devoting his talents as a teacher in instructing the unbaptized seekers and the faithful and as a literary defender (apologist) of Christian beliefs and practices. According to [Jerome](#), a 4th-century biblical scholar, Tertullian was ordained a priest, but this view has been challenged by some modern scholars.

During the next 20 to 25 years (his early 40s to mid 60s) Tertullian devoted himself almost entirely to literary pursuits. Developing an original and unprecedented Latin style, the fiery and tempestuous Tertullian became a lively and pungent propagandist though not the most profound writer in Christian antiquity. His works abound with arresting and memorable phrases, ingenious aphorisms, bold and ironic puns, wit, sarcasm, countless words of his own coinage, and a constant stream of invective against his opponents.

Tertullian is usually considered the outstanding exponent of the outlook that Christianity must stand uncompromisingly against its surrounding culture. Recent scholarship however has tended to qualify this interpretation, however. Like most educated Christians of his day, he recognized and appreciated the values of the Greco-Roman culture, discriminating between those he could accept and those he had to reject.

Sometime before 210 Tertullian left the orthodox church to join [Montanism](#) -- a new prophetic sectarian movement founded by the 2nd-century Phrygian prophet Montanus -- which had spread from Asia Minor to Africa. Jerome says he was 'distressed by the envy and laxity of the clergy of the Roman church', so he found the Montanist message of the imminent end of the world, combined with a stringent and demanding moralism, congenial. Tertullian gave himself fully to the defense of the new movement as its most articulate spokesman. Even the Montanists, however, were not rigorous enough for Tertullian. He eventually broke with them to found his own sect, a group that existed until the 5th century in Africa.

According to tradition, he lived to be an old man. His last writings date from ~220, but the date of his death is unknown.

Tertullian's writings are numerous. The ones relevant to the New Testament canon are:

<b>Writing</b>	<b>English Translation(s)</b>
<i>Adversus Marcionem</i> (Against Marcion)	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">New Advent</a>
<i>De Baptismo</i> (Concerning Baptism)	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">New Advent</a> ~ 200 CE. Extant in one manuscript and a printed copy of 1545 which goes back to an older manuscript
<i>De Cultu Feminarum</i> (Concerning the Apparel of Women)	<a href="#">Christian Classics Electronic Library</a>
<i>De Fuga in Persecutione</i> (Concerning Flight in Persecution)	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">New Advent</a>
<i>De Oratione</i> (Concerning Prayer)	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">New Advent</a>
<i>De Pudicitia</i> (Concerning Modesty)	<a href="#">Christian Classics Electronic Library</a>
<i>Scorpiace</i>	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">New Advent</a>

Tertullian's New Testament was not perceptively different from that of the preceding period. He cites all the books of the New Testament with the exception of:

II Peter, James, II John, and III John

He also considered these writings, not in the present New Testament, of value:

[Shepherd of Hermas](#)

However, the following he considered heretical:

### [Acts of Paul](#)

For a summary of his opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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## Tertullian and the Gospels

According to [Metzger](#) p. 159:

The four Gospels are the *Instrumentum evangelicum*, and their authors, he [Tertullian] insists, are either apostles or companions and disciples of apostles (*Adversus Marcion*, 4.2)

---

## Tertullian and Acts

According to [Metzger](#) p. 159:

In the course of the denunciation of Marcion, Tertullian chides him for not accepting the Acts of the Apostles, and so depriving himself of information concerning the career of the apostle Paul. (*Adversus Marcion*, 5.1)

---

## Tertullian and the Pauline Epistles

According to [Metzger](#) p. 159:

He [Tertullian] defends, one by one, each of the Pauline Epistles, expressing astonishment that Marcion has rejected the two Epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus: 'His aim was, I suppose, to carry out his interpolating process even to the number of [Paul's] Epistles'. (*Adversus Marcion*, 5.2-21)



Regarding the 3 Pastoral Epistles, Tertullian means that Marcion has not only mutilated the text of Paul's Epistles, but their number as well, by rejecting these three.

---

## Tertullian and Hebrews

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 159:

In another treatise Tertullian cites a passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews (6:4-8), which he attributes to Barnabas as the author, 'a man sufficiently accredited by God, as being one whom Paul had stationed next to himself' . (*De pudic.* 20)

---

## Tertullian and I Peter

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 159:

He [Tertullian] quotes several passages from I Peter, though without explicitly identifying the epistle. (*Scorp.* 12)

---

## Tertullian and I John

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 159:

From I John he [Tertullian] quotes 4:1-3 and launches into a long discussion of the Antichrist. (*Adversus Marcionem.* 5.16)

---

## Tertullian and Jude

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 159:

The Epistle of Jude (verse 14) is appealed to [by Tertullian] as a testimonial to the authority of Enoch. (*De cultu feminarum*. 1.3)

---

## Tertullian and the Revelation of John

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 159:

Several times he [Tertullian] refers to the Apocalypse of John in ways that prove that, for Tertullian, there is no other Apocalypse than that by the apostle John. (*Adversus Marcionem* 4.5; *De fuga in persecutione* 1; *De pudic.* 20)

---

## Tertullian and the Shepherd of Hermas

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 159-160:

Tertullian's opinion concerning Hermas changed over the years. In his earlier writings he speaks favorably of the *Shepherd* of Hermas (*De oratione* 16), but during his Montanist period he declares that the book has been adjudged (*judicaretur*) by every council in early times as false and apocryphal (*De pudic.* 10).

---

## Tertullian and the Acts of Paul

Tertullian writes:

As for those (women) who <appeal to> the falsely written Acts of Paul [example of Thecla]<in order to> defend the right of women to teach and to baptize, let them know that

the presbyter in Asia who produced this document, as if he could add something of his own to the prestige of Paul, was removed from his office after he had been convicted and had confessed that he had done it out of love for Paul (*De Baptismo* 17).

It was the administration of baptism by a woman that scandalized Tertullian and led him to condemn the entire book. A full discussion of this paragraph is in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#), v. 2 p. 214-215.

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## Clement of Alexandria (TITUS FLAVIUS CLEMENS)

**(born ~150 probably in Athens -- wrote 180-200 in Alexandria -- died between 211 and 215 in Jerusalem)**

Clement was a Christian Apologist, missionary theologian to the Greek cultural world, and second known leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria. He synthesized Greek philosophy and Mosaic tradition, and attempted to mediate Gnostics and orthodox Christians. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [Clement of Alexandria](#).



This image is taken from the [Encyclopædia Britannica](#). A [larger version](#) is available.

Clement was probably an Athenian by birth and of pagan parentage. Although well versed in all branches of Greek literature and in all the existing systems of philosophy, in these he found nothing of permanent satisfaction. In his adult years he embraced the Christian religion, and by extensive travels East and West sought the most distinguished teachers. Coming to Alexandria about 180 he became a pupil of Pantaenus, his teacher and first reported leader of the catechetical school. Captivated by his teacher, whom he was accustomed to call 'the blessed presbyter', Clement became, successively, a presbyter in the church at Alexandria, an assistant to Pantaenus, and, about 190, his successor as head of the catechetical school.

Clement wrote several works in Alexandria, the most important being:

Writing	English Translation(s)
<i>Protreptikos</i> (Exhortation)	<a href="#">New Advent</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> pp. 146-175
<i>Paidagogos</i> (The Instructor)	<a href="#">New Advent</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> pp. 176-265
<i>Stromata</i> (Miscellanies)	<a href="#">New Advent</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> pp. 266-535
<i>Hypotyposes</i>	<a href="#">New Advent</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> pp. 544-545 portions quoted by <a href="#">[Eusebius]</a>
<i>Eclogae Propheticae</i>	?

The writings of Clement disclose the amazingly broad scope of his knowledge of both classical and Biblical literature. On page after page of his treatises are copious citations of all kinds of literature. According to the tabulations of [\[Stählin\]](#), Clement cites some 359 classical and other non-Christian writers, 70 Biblical writings (including Old Testament apocrypha), and 36 patristic and New Testament apocryphal writings, including those of heretics. The total number of citations is about 8000, more than a third of which come from pagan writers. Furthermore, the statistics reveal that he quotes from New Testament writings almost twice as often as from the Old Testament.

After engaging in theological, ecclesiastical, and other disputes (e.g. concerning social justice and forms of Christian witnessing) for about 20 years, Clement was forced to flee Alexandria during the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperor Severus in 201-202. His position at the school was assumed by his young and gifted student [Origen](#), who became one of the greatest theologians of the Christian Church. Clement found refuge and employment with another former student, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, with whom he remained until his death.

One finds in Clement's work citations of all the books of the New Testament with the exception of:

Philemon, James, II Peter, II John, and III John

On the other hand he considered these writings, not in the present New Testament, of value:

- [Gospel of the Egyptians](#)
- [Gospel of the Hebrews](#)
- [Traditions of Matthias](#)
- [Preaching of Peter](#)
- [I Clement](#)
- [Epistle of Barnabas](#)
- [Didache](#)
- [Shepherd of Hermas](#)
- [Apocalypse of Peter](#)

For a summary of his opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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## Clement and the New Testament

According to [\[Metzger\]](#):

One finds in Clement's work citations of all the books of the New Testament with the exception of Philemon, James, 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John. (p. 131)

Presumably, these citations are listed in [\[Stählin\]](#).

---

## Clement and the Gospel of the Hebrews

<b>Clement</b>	
Strom. II 9.45	As it is written in the Gospel of the Hebrews:  <b>He that marvels shall reign, and he that has reigned shall rest.</b>

Strom. V 14.96

To those words this is equivalent:

He that seeks will not rest until he finds;  
and he that has found shall marvel; and  
he that has marveled shall reign; and he  
that has reigned shall rest.

According to the tabulations of [\[Stählin\]](#), Clement cites the Gospel of the Hebrews 3 times.

## Clement and the Gospel of the Egyptians

Clement	
Strom. III 45	When Salome asked, 'How long will death have power?' the Lord answered, 'So long as ye women bear children' - not as if life was something bad and creation evil, but as teaching the sequence of nature.
Strom. III 63	Those who are opposed to God's creation because of continence, which has a fair-sounding name, also quote the words addressed to Salome which I mentioned earlier. They are handed down, as I believe, in the Gospel of the Egyptians, For, they say: the savior himself said, 'I am come to undo the works of the female', by the female meaning lust, and by the works birth and decay.
Strom III 64	Since then the Word has alluded to the consummation, Salome saith rightly, 'Until when shall men die?' Now Scripture uses the term 'man' in the two senses, of the visible outward form and of the soul, and again of the redeemed man and of him who is not redeemed. And sin is called the death of the soul. Wherefore the Lord answers advisedly, 'So long as women bear children', i.e. so long as lusts are powerful.

Strom III 66	Why do they not also adduce what follows the words spoken to Salome, these people who do anything but walk by the gospel rule according to truth? For when she said, 'I have then done well in not bearing children', as if it were improper to engage in procreation, then the Lord answered and said, 'Eat every plant, but that which has bitterness eat not'.
Strom III 91ff	Therefore Cassianus now says, When Salome asked when what she had inquired about would be known, the Lord said, 'When you have trampled on the garment of shame and when the two become one and the male with the female (is) neither male nor female'. Now in the first place we have not this word with in the four Gospels that have been handed down to us, but in the Gospel of the Egyptians. Further he seems to me to fail to recognize that by the male impulse is meant wrath and by the female lust.
Strom III 97	Again the Lord says: He who has married should not repudiate his wife, and he who has not married should not marry.

According to the tabulations of [\[Stählin\]](#), Clement cites the Gospel of the Egyptians 8 times.

## Clement and the Traditions of Matthias

<b>Clement</b>	
Strom. II 9.45.4	The beginning thereof [ <i>sc. of the knowledge of the truth</i> ] is to wonder at things, as Plato says in the Theaetetus and Matthias in the Traditions when he warns 'Wonder at what is present' establishing this as the first step to the knowledge of things beyond.



Strom. III 4.26.3 Strom. II 208.7-9	They (the Gnostics) say that Matthias also taught as follows: 'To strive with the flesh and misuse it, without yielding to it in any way to unbridled lust, but to increase the soul through faith and knowledge'.
Strom VII 13.82.1	They say that Matthias the apostle in the Traditions explains at every turn: 'If the neighbor of one of the chosen sin, then has the elect sinned; for if he had so conducted himself as the Word commends, the neighbor would have had such awe at his way of life that he would not have fallen into sin'.

According to [\[Schneemelcher\]](#), all that survives of the Traditions of Matthias are the quotations of Clement. According to the tabulations of [\[Stählin\]](#), Clement cites the Traditions of Matthias 3 times.

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## Clement and the Preaching of Peter

For 12 quotations of Clement, see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) (Vol. 2 pp. 37-40). There can be no doubt that Clement regards this document as composed by Peter.

---

## Clement and I Clement

According to [\[Metzger\]](#):

He [Clement] refers to Orpheus as 'the theologian', and speaks of Plato as being 'under the inspiration of God'. Even the Epicurean Metrodorus uttered certain words 'divinely inspired'. It is not surprising then that, that he can quote passages as inspired from the epistles of Clement of Rome and of Barnabas, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. (p. 134)

Presumably, the quotations of Clement are listed in [\[Stählin\]](#).

---

## Clement and the Epistle of Barnabas

According to [\[Metzger\]](#):

He [Clement] refers to Orpheus as 'the theologian', and speaks of Plato as being 'under the inspiration of God'. Even the Epicurean Metrodorus uttered certain words 'divinely inspired'. It is not surprising then that, that he can quote passages as inspired from the epistles of Clement of Rome and of Barnabas, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. (p. 134)

However he does not hesitate to criticize an interpretation given by the author of the Epistle of Barnabas (*Paed.* II. x. 3, and *Strom.* II. xv. 67).

Presumably, the quotations of Clement are listed in [\[Stählin\]](#).

---

## Clement and the Didache

According to [\[Grant\]](#):

... he [Clement] employs the *Didache* only in *Stromata* I,100,4 - and there he does not name the work. (p. 167)

A complete discussion can be found in [\[Hitchcock\]](#).

---

## Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas

According to [\[Metzger\]](#):

He [Clement] refers to Orpheus as 'the theologian', and speaks of Plato as being 'under the inspiration of God'. Even

the Epicurean Metrodorus uttered certain words 'divinely inspired'. It is not surprising then that, that he can quote passages as inspired from the epistles of Clement of Rome and of Barnabas, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. (p. 134)

Presumably, the quotations of Clement are listed in [\[Stählin\]](#).

## Clement and the Apocalypse of Peter

Clement	Apocalypse of Peter
<p>Eclogae Propheticae 41</p>	<p>The Scripture says that the children exposed by parents are <b>delivered to a protecting angel</b>, by whom they are brought up and nourished. And they shall be, it says, as the faithful of a hundred years old here. Wherefore Peter also says in his Apocalypse, "<b>and a flash of fire, coming from their children and smiting the eyes of the women</b>".</p> <p>8 (Ethiopic)</p>
<p>Eclogae Propheticae 48-49</p>	<p>For example Peter in the Apocalypse says that <b>the children born abortively</b> receive the better part. These are <b>delivered to a care-taking angel</b>, so that after they have reached knowledge they may obtain the better abode, as if they had suffered what they would have</p>

suffered, had they attained to bodily life. But the others shall obtain salvation only as a people who have suffered wrong and experience mercy, and shall exist without torment, having received this as their reward. But the milk of the mothers which flows from their breasts and congeals, says Peter in the Apocalypse, shall beget tiny flesh-eating beasts and they shall run over them and devour them - which teaches that the punishments will come to pass by reason of the sins.

8 (Ethiopic)

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# The Development of the Canon of the New Testament

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## **Origen** (Origenes Adamantius) (b. ~185 in Egypt, d. 253/254 at Tyre)

Among ante-Nicene writers of the Eastern Church, the greatest by far was Origen, both as a theologian and as a prolific Biblical scholar. According to [Eusebius](#), Origen was born of Christian parents in Egypt, probably about 185, and spent most of his life in [Alexandria](#) as a teacher, but he also visited [Antioch](#), Athens, Arabia, Ephesus, and [Rome](#), and lived for a rather long period at Caesarea in Palestine. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [Origen and Origenism](#).

In the year 203 Origen was appointed by Demetrius, the bishop, to succeed [Clement](#) as head of the catechetical school in Alexandria. For a dozen years he carried on that work with marked success and with increasing numbers of pupils at the school. In 215, however, as a result of the Emperor Caracalla's furious attack upon the Alexandrians, Origen's work at the school was interrupted and he was driven from the city.

Origen took refuge at Caesarea in Palestine, where he preached in churches at the request of the bishops of Jerusalem and Caesarea. As he was only a layman, this was regarded by his bishop, Demetrius, as a breach of ecclesiastical discipline, in consequence of which he was recalled to Alexandria, where he resumed his scholarly work at the school.

In 230 Origen traveled to Greece on some church business and, stopping at Caesarea on his way, was ordained as a presbyter by the same friendly bishops who had invited him to preach on his previous visit. When Demetrius learned of this, he felt that his authority had been flouted, and, on Origen's return, deposed him from his teaching office and excommunicated him from the Alexandrian church on the grounds of irregularity of ordination.

Origen now moved back to Caesarea, where he opened a new Biblical and theological school which soon outshone that of Alexandria, and where he continued his extensive literary work, as well as preaching and giving Biblical expositions almost every day. In 250, during the Decian persecution, Origen was imprisoned, cruelly tortured, and condemned to the stake. Although he regained his liberty at the death of the emperor, he died soon afterward, in the year 253 or 254, probably as a result of the torture.

In his lifetime he was often attacked, suspected of adulterating the Gospel with pagan philosophy. After his death, opposition steadily mounted. The chief accusations against Origen's teaching are the following: making the Son inferior to the Father and thus being a precursor of Arianism, a 4th-century heresy that denied that the Father and the Son were of the same substance; spiritualizing away the resurrection of the body; denying hell, a morally enervating universalism; speculating about pre-existent souls and world cycles; dissolving redemptive history into timeless myth by using allegorical interpretation, thus turning Christianity into a kind of Gnosticism, a heretical movement that held that matter was evil and the spirit good. None of these charges is altogether groundless.

Only a small part of Origen's writings has come down to us, but this fills volumes. The ones relevant to the New Testament canon are:

Writing	English Translation(s)
<i>De Principiis</i>	<a href="#">New Advent</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a>
<i>Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew</i>	<a href="#">New Advent</a>
<i>Homily on Luke</i>	?
<i>Commentary on the Gospel of John</i>	<a href="#">New Advent</a>
<i>Commentary on Romans</i>	?
<i>Homilies on Hebrews</i>	?
<i>Homilies on Joshua</i>	?

One finds in them citations of all the books of the New Testament, though he expressed reservations concerning:

## [James](#), [II Peter](#), [II John](#), and [III John](#)

At other times Origen, accepts as Christian evidence any material he finds convincing or appealing, even designating on occasion these writings as 'divinely inspired':

- [Gospel of Peter](#)
- [Gospel of the Hebrews](#)
- [Acts of Paul](#)
- [I Clement](#)
- [Epistle of Barnabas](#)
- [Didache](#)
- [Shepherd of Hermas](#)

Origen denies the authenticity of these writings:

- [Gospel of Thomas](#)
- [Gospel of the Twelve](#)
- [Gospel of Basilides](#)
- [Gospel of the Egyptians](#)
- [Gospel of Matthias](#)
- [Preaching of Peter](#)

For a summary of his opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

---

## Origen and the Gospels

From Origen's *Homily on Luke* (1:1), according to the Latin translation of Jerome:

That there have been written down not only the four Gospels, but a whole series from which those that we possess have been chosen and handed down to the churches, is, let it be noted, what we may learn from Luke's preface, which runs thus: 'For as much as many have taken in hand to compose a narrative'. The expression 'they have taken in hand' involves a covert accusation of those who precipitately and without the grace of the Holy Ghost have set about the writing of the

gospels.

Matthew to be sure and Mark and John as well as Luke did not 'take in hand' to write, but filled with the Holy Ghost have written the Gospels. 'Many have taken in hand to compose a narrative of the events which are quite definitely familiar among us'. The Church possesses four Gospels, heresy a great many, of which one is entitled *'The Gospel according to the Egyptians'*, and another *'The Gospel according to the Twelve Apostles'*. Basilides also has presumed to write a gospel, and to call it by his own name. 'Many have taken in hand' to write, but only four Gospels are recognized. From these the doctrines concerning the person of our Lord and Savior are to be derived. I know a certain gospel which is called *'The Gospel according to Thomas'* and a *'Gospel according to Matthias'*, and many others have we read - lest we should in any way be considered ignorant because of those who imagine that they possess some knowledge if they are acquainted with these. Nevertheless, among all these we have approved solely what the Church has recognized, which is that only the four Gospels should be accepted.

Origen also wrote commentaries on the Gospels according to Matthew and John. Now and then Origen does quote or refer to (sometimes with approval) the [Gospel of Peter](#) and the [Gospel of the Hebrews](#).

---

## Origen and Acts

Origen's testimony concerning the Book of Acts is pervasive in his writings. As would be expected, he attributes Acts to Luke, the author of the Third Gospel; see p. 137 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

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## Origen and the Pauline Epistles

Origen makes frequent citations from the Pauline Epistles, including even the brief letter of Philemon (*Jer. hom.* 20.2). Often he uses the formula



'Paul says' or 'Paul said', and sometimes adds the name of those whom the apostle addresses. Only in the case of 2 Timothy does Origen make the remark 'some have dared to reject this Epistle, but they were not able' (*In Matt. ser. vet. interp.* 117). See p. 138 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

---

## Origen and the Hebrews

Throughout Origen's writings he quotes from the Epistle to the Hebrews more than 200 times, and in the vast majority of his references he is content to attribute it to Paul as its author. But near the close of his life (after 245 CE), where Origen is speaking as a scholar, he admits that the tradition of its authorship is wholly uncertain. From the composite account in [\[Eusebius\]](#):

In addition he makes the following statements concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, in his *Homilies* upon it: 'That the character of the diction of the Epistles entitled 'To the Hebrews' has not the apostle's rudeness in speech, who acknowledged himself to be rude in speech (2 Cor. 6:6), that is, in style, but that the Epistle is better Greek in the framing of its diction, will be admitted by everyone who is able to discern differences of style. But again, on the other hand, that the thoughts of the Epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged writings of the apostle, this also everyone who carefully examines the apostolic text will admit'. Further on he adds, If I gave my opinion, I should say that the thoughts are those of the apostle, but the style and composition belong to some one who remembered the apostle's teachings and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his teacher. Therefore, if any church holds that this Epistle is by Paul, let it be commended for this also. For it is not without reason that the men of old time have handed it down as Paul's. But who wrote the Epistle in truth, God knows. Yet the account that has reached us [is twofold] , some saying that Clement, bishop of Rome, wrote the Epistle, and others, that it was Luke, the one who wrote the Gospel and the Acts. (6.25.11-14)

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## Origen and James

Although the Epistle of James is quoted several times by Origen, in his *Commentary on John* (19.61) he refers to it as 'the Epistle of James that is in circulation', implying some doubt as to its authenticity. One also notes that in Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* (2.17), when he speaks at length of the brothers of Jesus, he mentions James but says nothing of his Epistle. For more discussion, see [\[Ruwet\]](#) pp. 29-32.

---

## Origen and I-II Peter

Throughout Origen's writings that have come down to us in Greek, he does quote from I Peter, but never from II Peter. And from the composite Latin account in [\[Eusebius\]](#):

And Peter, on whom the Church of Christ is built, 'against which the gates of hell shall not prevail' (Matt. 16:18), has left one acknowledged Epistle; possibly also a second, but this is disputed. (6.25.8)

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## Origen and I-III John, and the Revelation of John

Throughout Origen's writings that have come down to us in Greek, he does quote from I John, but never from II or III John. And from the composite Latin account in [\[Eusebius\]](#):

Why need I speak of him who leaned back on Jesus' breast (John 13:25), John, who has left behind one Gospel, though he confessed that he could write so many that even the world itself could not contain them (John 21:25). And he wrote also the Apocalypse, being ordered to keep silence and not to write the voices of the seven thunders (Rev. 10:4). He has also left an Epistle of a very few lines; and, it may be, a second and a third; for not all say that these are genuine -- but the two of them are not a hundred lines long. (6.25.9-10)

## Origen and Jude

In Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17), he says

And Jude, who wrote an Epistle of but a few lines, yet filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace, said in the salutation: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.

For more discussion, see [\[Ruwet\]](#) pp. 29-32.

---

## Origen and the Gospel of Peter

Origen refers to the Gospel of Peter in connection with identifying the brothers of Jesus as sons of Joseph by a former wife (*Comm. in Matt.* 10.17). See p. 137 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

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## Origen and the Gospel of the Hebrews

More than once Origen refers to the Gospel of the Hebrews, sometimes without further comment (*Comm. in John* 2.12; *Comm. in Matt.* 16.12), sometimes with a qualifying phrase, such as 'if any one receives it' (*Hom. in Jeremiah* 15.4; *Comm. in Matt.* 15.14). See p. 137 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

---

## Origen and the Preaching of Peter

Origen refers to the Preaching of Peter twice. The first is a report of its use by Heracleon, the Valentinian:

Now there is much to adduce from the words quoted by Heracleon from the so-called Preaching of Peter, and

regarding them inquiry has to be made concerning the book, whether it is genuine or not genuine or mixed. But for that very reason we would willingly pass it by and merely refer to the fact that it states that Peter taught: (God) should not be worshipped in the manner of the Greeks, who take material things and serve sticks and stones. Also the Divine ought not to be worshipped in the manner of the Jews, for they, who believe that they alone know God, rather do not know him and worship angels, the month and the moon. (*Comm. in John* 13.17)

And another passage preserved only in a Latin translation:

And if anyone should confront us with (a section) from that book which is called the 'Doctrine of Peter', in which the Savior seem to say to the disciples: **'I am not a bodiless demon'**, then the answer must be given him, in the first place, that this book is not included among the books of the Church, and further it must be pointed out that this writing comes neither from Peter nor from any other person inspired by the Spirit of God. (*De Princ. praef. 8*)

Whether the 'Doctrine of Peter' is the same as the 'Preaching of Peter' is discussed in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#), V. 2, p. 36.

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## Origen and the Acts of Paul

Origen refers to the Acts of Paul twice. In his work *De Principiis* he quotes a saying from the Acta Pauli (so in Rufinus' Latin translation): **'This is the Word, a living Being'** (I2.3). So far the quotation has not come to light in any known text of the Acts of Paul. But the following quotation *has* been verified:

If anyone cares to accept what is written in the Acts of Paul, where the Lord says: **'I am on the point of being crucified afresh'** ... (*Comm. in John* 20.12)

Origen thus knew this work, and probably valued it; at least he did not reject it as heretical. For more discussion see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#), V. 2, p.

215.

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## Origen and I Clement

Origen quotes from I Clement 4 times, see p. 140 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

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## Origen and the Epistle of Barnabas

Origen quotes from the Epistle of Barnabas 3 times; in fact on one occasion he calls it 'Barnabas'general epistle'. (*Contra Celsum* 1.63). See p. 140 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

---

## Origen and the Didache

According to [\[Grant\]](#):

It would appear that while he [Origen] was at Alexandria he regarded the *Didache*, Hermas and Barnabas as canonical, but that after moving to Caesarea he became aware that they were not accepted there. (p. 171)

For more discussion, see [\[Ruwet\]](#) pp. 33-38.

---

## Origen and the Shepherd of Hermas

Origen makes numerous references to the Shepherd of Hermas, and on one occasion, in his later years, he describes it as 'a work which seems to me very useful, and, as I believe, divinely inspired'. (*Comm. in Rom.* 10.31, written about 244-6). See p. 140 of [\[Metzger\]](#).

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## Didymus the Blind (born ~313, died ~398 CE Alexandria)

Didymus the blind was a celebrated head of the catechetical school at [Alexandria](#). Although he was a layman and had become blind at the age of 4, he memorized great sections of the scriptures and, by means of secretaries, dictated numerous exegetical works. Among those holding him in great esteem were [Athanasius](#), bishop of Alexandria, who made him head of the Alexandrian school; and [Jerome](#), who acknowledged Didymus as his master. Jerome later retracted, however, when the issue of Origenism became the subject of a heated controversy that subsequently culminated in the second Council (553) of Constantinople, in which Didymus' works - but not his person - were condemned for teaching Origenist doctrine. Because of this condemnation, most of his works were not copied during the Middle Ages and thus were lost.

The accidental discovery in 1941 at Taura, south of Cairo, of a group of papyrus codices, dating from the 6th or 7th centuries and comprising nearly 2000 pages, has brought to light the text of half a dozen additional commentaries. Although these commentaries are on Old Testament books, Didymus includes in his exposition hundreds of citations from the New Testament. These come from all the books of the New Testament with the exception of:

Philemon, [II John](#), and [III John](#)

On the other hand he considered these writings, not in the present New Testament, of value:

- [I Clement](#)
- [Epistle of Barnabas](#)

- [Didache](#)
- [Shepherd of Hermas](#)

For a visual summary of his opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

---

## Didymus and the New Testament

According to [\[Metzger\]](#):

These [Didymus' citations] come from all the books of the New Testament except Philemon, [II John](#), and [III John](#). (p. 213)

Presumably, these citations are listed in [\[Ehrman\]](#).

---

## Didymus and the Epistles of John

According to [\[Metzger\]](#) (p. 213):

... the fact that when quoting I John Didymus refers to it as *the* Epistle of John and not the First Epistle of John must mean that he did not accept the canonical status of II and III John.

---

## Didymus and the Apostolic Fathers

In his commentaries discovered in 1941, Didymus refers to four [Apostolic Fathers](#) with the following frequencies:

Apostolic Father	quotations and allusions
I Clement	1



Epistle of Barnabas	4
Didache	2
Shepherd of Hermas	5

Presumably, these citations are listed in [\[Ehrman\]](#).

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## Marcion and the Marcionites (144 - 3rd century CE)

At the end of July, 144 CE, a hearing took place before the clergy of the Christian congregations in Rome. Marcion, the son of the bishop of Sinope (a sea-port of Pontus along the Black Sea) who had become a wealthy ship-owner, stood before the presbyters to expound his teachings in order to win others to his point of view. For some years he had been a member of one of the Roman churches, and had proved the sincerity of his faith by making relatively large contributions. No doubt he was a respected member of the Christian community.

But what he now expounded to the presbyters was so monstrous that they were utterly shocked! The hearing ended in a harsh rejection of Marcion's views; he was formally excommunicated and his largesse of money was returned. From this time forward Marcion went his own way, energetically propagating a strange kind of Christianity that quickly took root throughout large sections of the Roman Empire and by the end of the 2nd century had become a serious threat to the mainstream Christian Church. In each city of any importance the Marcionites set up their church to defy the Christian one. Although in definite decline in the West from the middle of the 3rd to the 4th centuries, the movement proved more durable in the East, where, after remarkably overcoming the 3rd-century Roman persecutions of the emperors Valerian and Diocletian, it continued to flourish until as late as the 10th century, especially in Syrian culture. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [Marcionites](#).

Marcion wrote only a single work, *Antitheses* (Contradictions), in which he set forth his ideas. Since it has not been preserved, we must be content with deducing its contents from notices contained in the writings of opponents -- particularly in [Tertullian's](#) 5 volumes written against Marcion - *Adversus Marcionem*. An English translation is available at the [Christian Classics](#)

[Ethereal Library](#). The main points of Marcion's teaching were the rejection of the Old Testament and a distinction between the Supreme God of goodness and an inferior God of justice, who was the Creator and God of the Jews. He regarded Christ as the messenger of the Supreme God.

The Old and New Testaments, Marcion argued, cannot be reconciled to each other. The code of conduct advocated by Moses was '[an eye for an eye](#)', but Christ set this precept aside. Elisha had had children eaten by bears; Christ said, '[Let the little children come to me](#)'. Joshua had stopped the sun in its path in order to continue the slaughter of his enemies; Paul quoted Christ as commanding, '[Let not the sun go down on your wrath](#)'. In the Old Testament divorce was permitted and so was polygamy; but in the New Testament neither is allowed. Moses enforced the Jewish Sabbath and Law; Christ has freed believers from both.

Even within the Old Testament, Marcion found contradictions. God commanded that no work should be done on the Sabbath, yet he told the Israelites to carry the ark around Jericho 7 times on the Sabbath. No graven image was to be made, yet Moses was directed to fashion a bronze serpent. The deity revealed in the Old Testament could not have been omniscient, otherwise he would not have asked, '[Adam where are you?](#)' (Genesis 3:9).

Marcion, therefore, rejected the entire Old Testament. He accepted the following Christian writings in this order:

- [Gospel according to Luke](#)
- [Galatians](#)
- [I Corinthians](#)
- [II Corinthians](#)
- [Romans](#)
- [I Thessalonians](#)
- [II Thessalonians](#)
- [Ephesians](#) (which Marcion called Laodiceans)
- [Colossians](#)
- [Philemon](#)
- [Philippians](#)

but only after pruning and editorial adjustment. In his opinion the 12 apostles misunderstood the teaching of Christ, and, holding him to be the Messiah of the Jewish God, falsified his words from that standpoint. Passages that Marcion could regard only as Judaizing interpolations, that

had been smuggled into the text by biased editors, had to be removed so the authentic text of Gospel and Apostle could once again be available. After these changes, the Gospel according to Luke became the *Evangelicon*, and the 10 Pauline letters, the *Apostolikon*.

Marcion rejected the following Christian writings:

- [Gospel according to Matthew](#)
- [Gospel according to John](#)

For a summary of Marcion's opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

Marcion's canon accelerated the process of fixing the Church's canon, which had already begun in the first half of the 2nd century. It was in opposition to Marcion's criticism that the Church first became fully conscious of its inheritance of apostolic writings. According to [\[Grant\]](#) (p. 126): "Marcion forced more orthodox Christians to examine their own presuppositions and to state more clearly what they already believed".

---

## Marcion and the Gospel according to Luke

Marcion believed there was one true gospel which had been corrupted into many versions. He explained the corruption on the basis of Galatians in which Paul emphasizes that there is only one gospel ([1:8-10](#)) and states that false brethren are attempting to turn believers from this gospel ([1:6-7](#)).

Of the Gospels that were current among the churches, the only one that Marcion felt he could trust was the Gospel according to Luke. We cannot say with certainty why he had confidence in this Gospel, but perhaps the reason was that he regarded the author, Luke, as a disciple of Paul and believed him to be more faithful to tradition than the other evangelists. In any case, this was for Marcion *the* Gospel, without identification of its human author -- a deficiency for which [Tertullian](#) (*Adv. Marc.* 4.2) castigates Marcion.

Passages that Marcion could regard only as Judaizing interpolations, that had been smuggled into the text by biased editors, had to be removed so the authentic text of Gospel, which he called the *Evangelicon*, could once again be available. With thorough-going heedlessness of the consequences,

Marcion undertook to expunge everything from the text of Luke which echoed or otherwise implied a point of contact with the Old Testament. Since Jesus, according to Marcion, had only the appearance of being human, he could not have been born of a woman. Therefore Marcion omitted most of the first 4 chapters of Luke. In the last chapters the omissions are rather more numerous than the first; the resurrection of Jesus is passed over in silence. More examples may be found in [\[Evans\]](#) (pp. 643-6).

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## Marcion and Galatians

Marcion deemed Galatians the most important of Paul's epistles. He explained the corruption of the true gospel on the basis of Galatians in which Paul states that false brethren are attempting to turn believers from the gospel:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Galatians 1:6-7)

and emphasizes that there is only one Gospel:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8-10)

But Marcion removed whatever he judged were interpolations - that is, anything that did not agree with his understanding of what Paul should have written. For example, Galatians 3:16-4:6 was deleted because of its reference to Abraham and its descendants. More examples may be found in [\[Evans\]](#) (pp. 643-6).

Marcion placed Galatians first in his canon of epistles - the *Apostolikon*.

---

## Marcion and the Pauline Epistles

Marcion was convinced that among the early apostolic leaders only Paul understood the significance of Jesus Christ as the messenger of the Supreme God. He accepted as authoritative these 10 Epistles:

- [Galatians](#)
- I Corinthians
- II Corinthians
- Romans
- I Thessalonians
- II Thessalonians
- Ephesians (which Marcion called Laodiceans)
- Colossians
- Philemon
- Philippians

which he called the *Apostolikon*. These became for him the source, the guarantee, and the norm of true doctrine.

But Marcion removed whatever he judged were interpolations - that is, anything that did not agree with his understanding of what Paul should have written. Examples may be found in [\[Evans\]](#) (pp. 643-6).

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## Valentinus, and the Valentinians (2nd - 3rd century)

Valentinus was the founder of Roman and Alexandrian schools of Gnosticism, an eclectic, dualistic system of religious doctrines postulating the evil origin of matter and the revelatory enlightenment, or *gnosis*, of an elite. Valentinus flourished 136-165 CE in [Rome](#) and [Alexandria](#).

Valentinian communities, by their expansion and long standing, provided a major challenge to 2nd and 3rd century Christian theology.

According to [Irenaeus](#), Valentinus was a native of Egypt who studied philosophy at Alexandria. His disciples claimed that he had been educated by Theodas (or Theudas), a pupil of the apostle Paul. He moved to Rome c. 136 CE, during the time of Pope St. Hyginus, where he established a large school and spread his doctrines in the West. He claimed to have received revelations from the Logos in a vision. Later, aspiring to be elected bishop of Rome "on account of his intellectual force and eloquence", he was passed over, whereupon he seceded from the Church and moved away from Rome c. 140, perhaps to Cyprus.

Valentinus' system is an elaborate theogonic and cosmogonic epic. It describes in 3 acts the creation, fall, and the redemption; first in heaven, then on earth. The spiritual world or *pleroma* comprises 30 *aeons* forming a succession of *syzygies* (pairs). The visible world owes its origin to the fall of *Sophia* (wisdom), whose offspring, the *Demiurge*, is identified with the God of the Old Testament. Human beings belong to one of 3 classes, the spiritual people (*pneumatikoi*, or true Gnostics), those who merely possess a soul (*psychikoi*, or ordinary unenlightened church members), and the rest of humankind, who are made solely of matter (*hylikoi*) and are given over to eternal perdition.

Valentinus derived his system from Oriental and Greek speculations



(including Pythagorean elements), from Christian ideals, and from his own fertile imagination. By employing fanciful exegesis he attached his own mythological speculations to apostolic words, such as *Logos*, *Only Begotten*, *Truth*, *Pleroma*, *Aeons*, and *Ecclesia*. The Valentinian system developed into Eastern and Western forms in greater complexity, although the earlier structure was similar to Pauline mystical theology, with its emphasis on the instrumentality of Christ's death and resurrection in effecting Christian deliverance.

In listing the Valentinian canon of books, we will use the writings of these Valentinians:

- [Heracleon](#)
- [Ptolemy](#)
- [Marcus](#)

We also use these writings from the Nag Hammadi Library, which seem to derive from Valentinus:

Writing	English Translation(s)
<a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a>	<a href="#">[Robinson]</a> , <a href="#">The Gnosis Archive</a>
<a href="#">Gospel of Philip</a>	<a href="#">[Robinson]</a> , <a href="#">The Gnosis Archive</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a>
<a href="#">Treatise on Resurrection</a>	<a href="#">[Robinson]</a> , <a href="#">The Gnosis Archive</a>

Irenaeus reports that the Valentinians wrote the *Gospel of Truth*. Scholars are divided as to whether the Nag Hammadi Gospel of Truth derives from Valentinus. More like a meditation on the Christian life and salvation than a traditional gospel, the treatise shows little trace of the elaborate speculations that are associated with the Valentinian system. Some scholars, however, believe that these speculations are not emphasized in order to conciliate orthodox opinion. We will follow the latter opinion. The opinions on the other two writings are not controversial.

These New Testament books are cited or quoted from in the writings just mentioned:

- [Gospel according to Matthew](#)
- [Gospel according to Mark](#)



- [Gospel according to Luke](#)
- [Gospel according to John](#)
- [Romans](#)
- [I Corinthians](#)
- [II Corinthians](#)
- [Galatians](#)
- [Ephesians](#)
- [Philippians](#)
- [Colossians](#)
- [I Peter](#)
- [I John](#)
- [Revelation of John](#)

Irenaeus and Origen report that the Valentinians regarded these books as scripture:

- [Gospel of Truth](#)
- [Preaching of Peter](#)

For a summary of these opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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## **Heracleon (middle 2nd century, Italy)**

Heracleon, a disciple of Valentinus, wrote a detailed commentary on the Gospel according to John, probably after the middle of the 2nd century. [Origen](#) preserved many fragments of the commentary and criticizes them in his own commentary. Heracleon's allegory is carried out completely in such a way that, for example, the Demiurge speaks through a Baptist, and the Samaritan woman appears as a type of the pneumatic woman who is dissatisfied with the Jacob's well of the Old Testament and so turns to the living water of *gnosis* and longs for her future spouse in the *pleroma*.

Heracleon's commentary on John also includes quotations from and allusions to passages in Matthew, as well as allusions to Romans, I Corinthians, and possibly Galatians.

According to Origen, Heracleon used the *Preaching of Peter*; quotations from [Origen](#) are available.

## Ptolemy

Ptolemy, a disciple of Valentinus, is known as the author of an open letter to a wealthy and eminent Christian lady, Flora by name, whom he tries to convert to the Valentinian system. He deals chiefly with the objection that the creation of the world and the composition of the Old Testament could not have been the work of the highest God. He appeals to apostolic tradition and to the words of Christ, who alone knows the Father of all and first revealed him. More than once Ptolemy refers to what 'our Savior' has said, quoting in these cases Jesus' words as presented in the Gospel according to Matthew. Once he refers to Paul, and several time quotes from Romans, I Corinthians, and Ephesians. He also quotes the Gospel according to John 1:3, but without naming him.

---

## Marcus (middle 2nd century, Rhone valley)

Marcus, a disciple of Valentinus, appears to have been an older contemporary of [Irenaeus](#) who speaks of him as though he were still living and teaching in the Rhone valley (*Adv. Haer.* 1.13.2). The fragments that remain of Marcus' teachings contain allusions to passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It seems that he accepted one or more of Paul's Epistles, and the Apostle is referred to by name in one place. The Marcosians sought to show by means of the system of gematria that the heavenly Christ came upon the earthly Jesus in the form of a dove at the time of his baptism in the Jordan. Proof was found in the fact that the numerical value of the letters in the Greek word for dove comes to 801, which is also found in the statement of Christ in the Revelation of John (1:8): 'I am the Alpha and Omega' (1+800=801).

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## Gospel of Philip (2nd century(?) Syria(?))

The original of this Coptic document from Nag Hammadi certainly was written in Greek. It provides striking confirmation of some aspects of Irenaeus' account of Valentinianism and to this extent confirms the

substantial reliability of his report. New Testament echoes and allusions in *Gospel of Philip* range from clear and unmistakable quotations to insignificant reminiscences. According to a tally made by [\[Wilson\]](#):

Of the four Gospels, the author's preference is clearly for Matthew and John, although there is at least one distinct allusion to Luke; there does not appear to be any evidence for knowledge of Mark. With the Fourth Gospel may be linked a couple allusions to I John, and there is at least one clear citation of I Peter. Among the Pauline letters he knows and quotes from Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians.

The author of the *Gospel of Philip* never identifies any of the sources from which he quotes, nor does he ever employ any formula of citation (such as 'it is written'). Often the allusions are worked into the context, suggesting that their language had become a natural vehicle for the expression of his ideas. All of this implies, of course, that he had given careful attention to some of the New Testament books and saw fit to adopt their ideas and, at times, their phraseology.

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## **Treatise on Resurrection (late 2nd century)**

The original of this Coptic document from Nag Hammadi certainly was written in Greek. It is permeated with Valentinian symbols and imagery. Using Romans 8:17 and Ephesians 2:5-6, the author declares that the elect have already participated in Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension (45:24-28). Immediately following death a spiritual resurrection of the believer takes place, and an allusion to the Transfiguration scene in the Synoptic Gospels is made in order to prove the continuity between the deceased and the resurrected person (48:3-11).

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## **The Valentinians and the Gospel according to Matthew**

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

<b>Author/Writing</b>	<b>References</b>
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<a href="#">Heracleon</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
<a href="#">Ptolemy</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
<a href="#">Marcus</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
<a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a>	<a href="#">[van Unnik]</a> and <a href="#">[Menard]</a>
<a href="#">Gospel of Philip</a>	<a href="#">[Wilson]</a>

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## **The Valentinians and the Gospel according to Mark**

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

<b>Author/Writing</b>	<b>References</b>
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<a href="#">Marcus</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
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## **The Valentinians and the Gospel according to Luke**

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

<b>Author/Writing</b>	<b>References</b>
-----------------------	-------------------

<a href="#">Marcus</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
<a href="#">Gospel of Philip</a>	<a href="#">[Wilson]</a>

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## The Valentinians and the Gospel according to John

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

<b>Author/Writing</b>	<b>References</b>
-----------------------	-------------------

<a href="#">Heracleon</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
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<a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a>	<a href="#">[van Unnik]</a> and <a href="#">[Menard]</a>
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<a href="#">Gospel of Philip</a>	<a href="#">[Wilson]</a>
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## The Valentinians and Romans

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

<b>Author/Writing</b>	<b>References</b>
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<a href="#">Heracleon</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
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<a href="#">Ptolemy</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
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<a href="#">Gospel of Truth</a>	<a href="#">[van Unnik]</a> and <a href="#">[Menard]</a>
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<a href="#">Gospel of Philip</a>	<a href="#">[Wilson]</a>
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<a href="#">Treatise on Resurrection</a>	<a href="#">[Metzger]</a>
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## The Valentinians and I Corinthians

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

<b>Author/Writing</b>	<b>References</b>
-----------------------	-------------------

[Heracleon](#)      [\[Metzger\]](#)

[Ptolemy](#)      [\[Metzger\]](#)

[Gospel of Truth](#)   [\[van Unnik\]](#) and [\[Menard\]](#)

[Gospel of Philip](#)   [\[Wilson\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and II Corinthians

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

**Author/Writing    References**

[Gospel of Philip](#)   [\[Wilson\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and Galatians

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

**Author/Writing    References**

[Gospel of Truth](#)   [\[van Unnik\]](#) and [\[Menard\]](#)

[Gospel of Philip](#)   [\[Wilson\]](#)

---

## The Valentinians and Ephesians

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

**Author/Writing                      References**

[Ptolemy](#)

[\[Metzger\]](#)

[Gospel of Truth](#)

[\[van Unnik\]](#) and [\[Menard\]](#)

[Treatise on Resurrection](#) [\[Metzger\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and Philippians

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

**Author/Writing References**

[Gospel of Philip](#) [\[Wilson\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and Colossians

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

**Author/Writing References**

[Gospel of Truth](#) [\[van Unnik\]](#) and [\[Menard\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and I Peter

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

**Author/Writing References**

[Gospel of Philip](#) [\[Wilson\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and I John

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

### Author/Writing References

[Gospel of Philip](#) [\[Wilson\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and Revelation of John

For details about a specific Valentinian author or writing, please consult the corresponding references:

### Author/Writing References

[Gospel of Truth](#) [\[van Unnik\]](#) and [\[Menard\]](#)

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## The Valentinians and the Gospel of Truth

[Irenaeus](#) reports (*Adv. Haer.* 3.11.9):

But the followers of Valentinus, putting away all fear, bring forward their own compositions and boast that they have more Gospels than really exist. Indeed their audacity has gone so far that they entitle their recent composition the Gospel of Truth, though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the apostles, and so no Gospel of theirs is free from blasphemy. For if what they produce is the Gospel of Truth, and is different from those which the apostles handed down to us, those who care to can learn how it can be shown from the Scriptures themselves that [then] what is handed down from the apostles is not the [Gospel of Truth](#).

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## The Valentinians and the Preaching of Peter

Origen reports (*Comm. in Joh.* 13.17):

Now there is much to adduce from the words quoted by Heracleon from the so-called Preaching of Peter, and regarding them inquiry has to be made concerning the book, whether it is genuine or not genuine or mixed. But for that very reason we would willingly pass it by and merely refer to the fact that it states that Peter taught: (God) should not be worshipped in the manner of the Greeks, who take material things and serve stocks and stones. Also the Divine ought not to be worshipped in the manner of the Jews, for they, who believe that they alone know God, rather do not know him and worship angels, the month and the moon.

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## Justin Martyr, Saint (~100 Shechem, Samaria - ~165 CE, Rome)

Justin Martyr was one of the most important of the Greek philosopher-Apologists in the early church, whose writings represent the first positive encounter of Christian revelation with Greek philosophy and laid the basis for a theology of history. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [St. Justin Martyr](#).



This icon is taken from [Holy Transfiguration Monastery](#). A [larger version](#) is available.

A pagan reared in a Jewish environment, Justin studied Stoic and Platonic philosophy at Ephesus, near modern Selcuk, Turkey. He converted to Christianity about 130 and short time later became a Christian teacher where he engaged in a disputation with Trypho, a Jew (~ 135). After a few years he moved to Rome, where he founded a Christian school. Here he met vehement opposition in the Cynic philosopher Crescens whose antagonism made Justin determined to compose an 'Apology' or reasoned defense of the Christian faith. This was issued ~150 in the form of a petition addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Sometime afterward he published his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. A shorter, *Second Apology* was addressed to the Senate, apparently after the accession of Marcus Aurelius (161 CE). A few years later, Justin was denounced to the Roman prefect as subversive and condemned to death. Authentic records of the martyrdom survive.

In summary, the relevant writings of Justin are:

Writing	Remarks	English Translation(s)
<i>First Apology</i>	~150 CE	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a>
<i>Dialogue with Trypho the Jew</i>	142 chapters long, the longest by an orthodox Christian writer at the time	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a>
<i>Second Apology</i>	~160 CE	<a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a>

Justin Martyr does not quote by name from any New Testament writings. He does use the formulae of quotation 'it is recorded' and 'it is written', when quoting from the 'Memoirs of the apostles' or simply the 'Memoirs'. These 'Memoirs', Justin tells his non-Christian readers, were called the 'Gospels'. He mentions that in Sunday services of worship, "the Memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets [from the Old Testament] are read, for a long as time permits." In many cases the quotations show features of harmonization with passages in one specific Gospel. There is also a clear allusion to the Revelation of John.

In summary, there is evidence that Justin Martyr considered these books of spiritual value:

- [Gospel according to Matthew](#)
- [Gospel according to Mark](#)
- [Gospel according to Luke](#)
- [Gospel according to John](#)
- [Revelation of John](#)

For a summary of Justin's opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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## Justin Martyr and the Gospel according to Matthew

<b>Justin</b>		<b>Matthew</b>
Dial. 106.4	...when a star rose in heaven at the time of his [Jesus'] birth, as is recorded in the Memoirs of his apostles, the Magi from Arabia, recognizing the sign by this, came and worshipped him.	c.f. 2:1

More examples can be found in [\[Bellinzoni\]](#) and [\[Kline\]](#).

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## Justin Martyr and the Gospel according to Mark

<b>Justin</b>		<b>Mark</b>
Dial. 106.4	(to be supplied)	3:16-17

More examples can be found in [\[Bellinzoni\]](#) and [\[Kline\]](#).

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## Justin Martyr and the Gospel according to Luke

<b>Justin</b>		<b>Luke</b>
Dial. 103.8	...in the Memoirs [Gospels] which, as I have said, were drawn up by the apostles and their followers, [it is recorded] that sweat fell like drops of blood while he [Jesus] was praying, and saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass'.	c.f. 22:44,42

More examples can be found in [\[Bellinzoni\]](#) and [\[Kline\]](#).

---

## Justin Martyr and the Gospel according to John

<b>Justin</b>		<b>John</b>

I Apol. 61.4

Christ also said 'Unless you are born again you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven'.

3:3

Furthermore, it appears that it was from the Fourth Gospel that Justin obtained these ideas:

That Christ is the firstborn of God, being the *logos* of which every race of people have been partakers, we have been taught and have declared. (*I Apol.* 46.2, c.f. John 1:1,9)

I have already shown that he was the only-begotten of the Father of the universe, having been begotten by him in a peculiar manner as his Logos and Power, and having afterward become man through the virgin, as we have learned from the Memoirs. (*Dial.* 105.1)

More examples can be found in [\[von Loewenich\]](#) (pp. 39-50) and [\[Osborn\]](#) (p. 137).

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## Justin Martyr and the Revelation of John

Justin does not quote the Revelation, but appeals to it as proof of the existence of prophetic power in the Christian Church:

Moreover also among us a man named John, one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in a revelation made to him that those who have believed on our Christ will spend a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that hereafter the general and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all will likewise take place. (*Dial.* 81.4)

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## Ignatius of Antioch (born ? -- died (apparently martyred) ~110 CE in Rome)

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in Syria, is known mainly as the author of 7 letters that had exceptional influence in the early church. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [St. Ignatius of Antioch](#). He



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was apparently anxious to counteract the teachings of two groups: the Judaizers, who did not accept the authority of the New Testament (although the NT did not really exist at that time); and the Docetists, who held that Christ's sufferings and death were only apparent. The letters have often been cited to determine what beliefs were held in the early church. These letters are:

Writing	Abbrev.	English Translation(s)
Letter to the Ephesians	Eph.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a>
Letter to the Magnesians	Mag.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a> , <a href="#">Athenaeum of Christian Antiquity</a>

Letter to the Trallians	Trall.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a> , <a href="#">Athenaeum of Christian Antiquity</a>
Letter to the Romans	Rom.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a>
Letter to the Philadelphians	Phil.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a> , <a href="#">Athenaeum of Christian Antiquity</a>
Letter to the Smyrnaeans	Smyr.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a> , <a href="#">Athenaeum of Christian Antiquity</a>
Letter to Polycarp	Poly.	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">[LHH]</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical Homepage</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">CCAT Public Archive</a>

Ignatius does not refer to older Christian writings by name, but his letters have quotations (of approval) from these writings:

- [Gospel according to Matthew](#)
- [Gospel according to Luke](#)
- [Acts](#)
- [Romans](#)
- [I Corinthians](#)

- [Ephesians](#)
- [Colossians](#)
- [I Thessalonians](#)

Ignatius is held in high regard in the West Syrian Church (an independent Christian Church). Every patriarch since 1293 bears the surname "Ignatios" in his honor. The present (1982) patriarch, Ignatios XXXIX Jacob III, rules from Damascus over 11 metropolitans and 3 bishops and over the Syrian Orthodox Church in Malabar.

The quotations below follow [\[Richardson\]](#). For a summary of this evidence see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

## Ignatius quotes the Gospel according Matthew

Ignatius		Matthew
Eph. 14:2	No one who professes faith falls into sin, nor does one who has learned to love hate. "The tree is known by its fruit". Similarly, those who profess to be Christ's will be recognized by their actions. For what matters is not a momentary act of professing, but being persistently motivated by faith.	12:33
Smyr. 6:1	Let no one be misled: heavenly beings, the splendor of angels, and principalities, visible and invisible, if they fail to believe in Christ's blood, they too are doomed. "Let him accept it who can". Let no one's position swell in his head, for faith and love are everything -- there is nothing preferable to them.	19:12
Poly. 2:2	In all circumstances be "wise as a serpent", and perpetually "harmless as a dove". The reason you have a body as well as a soul is that you may win the favor of the visible world. But ask that you may have revelations of what is unseen. In that way you will lack nothing and have an abundance of every gift.	10:16



## Ignatius quotes I Thessalonians

Ignatius		I Thessalonians
Eph. 10:1	"Keep on praying" for others too, for there is a chance of their being converted and getting to God. Let them, then, learn from you at least from your actions.	5:17

## Ignatius quotes I Colossians

Ignatius		Colossians
Eph. 10:2	Return their bad temper with gentleness; their boasts with humility; their abuse with prayer. In the face of their error, be "steadfast in the faith". Return their violence with mildness and do not be intent on getting your own back.	1:23

## Ignatius quotes I Corinthians

Ignatius		I Corinthians
Eph. 18:1	I am giving my life (not that it's worth much!) for the cross, which unbelievers find a stumbling block, but which means to us salvation and eternal life. "Where is the wise man? Where is the debater?" Where are the boasts of those supposedly intelligent?	1:20

Trall. 1:3	Those too who are deacons of Jesus Christ's " <b>mysteries</b> " must give complete satisfaction to everyone. For they do not serve mere food and drink, but minister to God's Church. They must therefore avoid leaving themselves open to criticism, as they would shun fire.	4:1
Trall. 12:3	Out of love I want you to heed me, so that my letter will not tell against you. Moreover, pray for me. By God's mercy I need your love if I am going to deserve the fate I long for, and not prove a " <b>castaway</b> ".	9:27
Rom.5:1-2	Even now as a prisoner, I am learning to forgo my own wishes. All the way from Syria to Rome I am fighting with wild beasts, by land and sea, night and day, chained as I am to ten leopards (I mean to a detachment of soldiers), who only get worse the better you treat them. But by their injustices I am becoming a better disciple, " <b>though not for that reason am I acquitted</b> ". What a thrill I shall have from the wild beasts that are ready for me! I hope they will make short work of me. I shall coax them on to eat me up at once and not to hold off, as sometimes happens, through fear.	4:4
Rom. 6:1	Not the wide bounds of earth nor the kingdoms of this world nor the kingdoms of this world will avail me anything. " <b>I would rather die</b> " and get to Jesus Christ, than reign over the ends of the earth. That is what I am looking for -- the One who died for us. That is whom I want -- the One who rose for us.	9:15

## Ignatius quotes Romans

Ignatius	Romans	
Eph. 20:2	<p>I will do this especially if the Lord shows me that you are all, every one of you, meeting together under the influence of grace that we owe to the Name, in one faith and in union with Christ who was "descended from David according to the flesh" and is Son of man and Son of God. At these meetings you should heed the bishop and presbytery attentively, and break one loaf, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote which wards off death but yields continuous life in union with Jesus Christ.</p>	1:3

## Ignatius quotes Acts

Ignatius	Acts	
Mag. 5:1	<p>Yes, everything is coming to an end, and we stand before this choice -- death or life -- and everyone will go "to his own place". Once might say similarly, there are two coinages, one God's, the other the world's. Each bears its own stamp -- unbelievers that of this world; believers, who are spurred by love, the stamp of God the Father through Jesus Christ. And if we do not willingly die in union with his Passion, we do not have his life in us.</p>	1:25

## Ignatius quotes Gospel according to Luke

Ignatius	Luke	

Smyr. 3:1-2	<p>For myself, I am convinced and believe that even after the resurrection he was in the flesh. Indeed, when he came to Peter and his friends, he said to them, "Take hold of me, touch me and see that I am not a bodiless ghost." And they at once touched him and were convinced, clutching his body and his very breath. For this reason they despised death itself, and proved its victors. Moreover, after the resurrection he ate and drank with them as a real human being, although in spirit he was united with the Father.</p>	24:39
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## Ignatius quotes Ephesians

Ignatius		Ephesians
Poly. 1:2	<p>God grant I may never forget it! By the grace which you have put on, I urge you to press forward in your race and to urge everybody to be saved. Vindicate your position by giving your whole attention to its material and spiritual sides. Make unity your concern -- there is nothing better than that. Lend everybody a hand, as the Lord does you. "Out of love be patient" with everyone, as indeed you are.</p>	4:2
Poly. 5:1	<p>Tell my sisters to love the Lord and to be altogether contented with their husbands. Similarly urge my brothers in the name of Jesus Christ "to love their wives as the Lord loves the Church".</p>	5:25,29

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## Athanasius of Alexandria (born ~293 CE, Alexandria -- died May 2 373 CE, Alexandria)

Saint Athanasius, theologian, ecclesiastical statesman, and Egyptian national leader, was the chief defender of Christian orthodoxy in the 4th-century battle against [Arianism](#), the heresy that the Son of God



This icon is taken from [Orthodox Byzantine Icons](#). The artist and date are unknown. A [larger version](#) is available.

was a creature of like, but not of the same, substance as God the Father. Athanasius attended the Council of Nicaea (325) and shortly thereafter became bishop of Alexandria (328). For the rest of his life he was engaged in theological and political struggles with the Emperor and with Arian churchmen, being banished from Alexandria several times. He wrote many important works, including his major theological treatises, *The Life of St. Antony* and *Four Orations against the Arians*, and a number of letters on theological, pastoral, and administrative topics. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [St. Athanasius](#).

A clear acknowledgment of the NT canon of 27 books appears in the [39th Festal Letter of Athanasius](#). Here the threefold division of [Origen](#) or [Eusebius](#) is abandoned. As 'springs of salvation' there are only the 27 writings in which 'the doctrine of piety is proclaimed'. Over against them are set the apocrypha fabricated by the heretics. Only the [Didache](#) and [Shepherd of Hermas](#) -- besides a few OT apocrypha -- are permitted for reading by those newly received into the Church, since the Fathers have so appointed. But these writings are not "canonical". We may however infer from the concession that the two writings mentioned still enjoyed very great esteem. For a visual summary of Athanasius' opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

There is no question that the emphasis on the exclusiveness and finality of the canon is closely connected with Athanasius' total theological conception, anti-heretical and Bible-related. Over and above that it has to be observed that precisely in the years after 362, his concern was directed towards the unity of the 'orthodox' Church, and hence that for him a uniform canon was also a necessity.

It is important that Athanasius turns sharply against all apocrypha, so that the lines are drawn as sharply as possible between canonical and apocryphal writings. Whatever they may be in terms of their origin, their content or their age, the 'apocrypha' are downgraded as heretical and therefore excluded from any ecclesiastical use. We cannot establish what effect Athanasius' letter had outside of Egypt. We may conjecture that it advanced the recognition of the 7 'catholic' epistles in the East, but it could not remove the opposition to the Revelation of John. This book only achieved its firm place in the canon of the Greek Church in the 10th century.

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## **The 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius (367 CE)**

It was an ancient custom for the bishop of Alexandria to write, if possible, every year soon after Epiphany a so-called Festal Epistle to the Egyptian churches and monasteries under his authority, in which he informed them of the date of Easter and the beginning of the Lenten fast. By fixing the date of Easter, this yearly epistle fixed also the dates of all Christian festivals of the year. In view of the reputation of Alexandrian scholars who were devoted to astronomical calculations, it is not surprising that other parts of Christendom should eventually come to rely on the Egyptian Church for information concerning the date of Easter, made available to the Western Church through the bishop of Rome, and to the Syrian Church through the bishop of Antioch.

From Athanasius' 39th Festal Letter in the year 367:

Since, however, we have spoken of the heretics as dead but of ourselves as possessors of the divine writings unto salvation, and since I am afraid that -- as Paul has written to the Corinthians [2 Cor. 11:3] -- some guileless persons may be led astray from their purity and holiness by the craftiness

of certain men and begin thereafter to pay attention to other books, the so-called apocryphal writings, being deceived by their possession of the same names as the genuine books, I therefore exhort you to patience when, out of regard to the Church's need and benefit, I mention in my letter matters with which you are acquainted. It being my intention to mention these matters, I shall, for the commendation of my venture, follow the example of the evangelist Luke and say [cf. Luke 1:1-4]: Since some have taken in hand to set in order for themselves the so-called apocrypha and to mingle them with the God-inspired scripture, concerning which we have attained to a sure persuasion, according to what the original eye-witness and ministers of the word have delivered unto our fathers, I also, having been urged by true brethren and having investigated the matter from the beginning, have decided to set forth in order the writings that have been put in the canon, that have been handed down and confirmed as divine, in order that every one who has been led astray may condemn his seducers, and that every one who has remained stainless may rejoice, being again reminded of that.

Athanasius now in the first place enumerates the scriptures of the Old Testament. He then proceeds:

Continuing, I must without hesitation mention the scriptures of the New Testament; they are the following: the four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, after them the Acts of the Apostles and the seven so-called catholic epistles of the apostles -- namely, one of James, two of Peter, then three of John and after these one of Jude. In addition there are fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul written in the following order: the first to the Romans, then two to the Corinthians and then after these the one to the Galatians, following it the one to the Ephesians, thereafter the one to the Philippians and the one to the Colossians and two to the Thessalonians and the epistle to the Hebrews and then immediately two to Timothy , one to Titus and lastly the one to Philemon. Yet further the Revelation of John

These are the springs of salvation, in order that he who is thirsty may fully refresh himself with the words contained in them. In them alone is the doctrine of piety proclaimed. Let no one add anything to them or take anything away from



them...

But for the sake of greater accuracy I add, being constrained to write, that there are also other books besides these, which have not indeed been put in the canon, but have been appointed by the Fathers as reading-matter for those who have just come forward and which to be instructed in the doctrine of piety: the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobias, the so-called Teaching [Didache] of the Apostles, and the Shepherd. And although, beloved, the former are in the canon and the latter serve as reading matter, yet mention is nowhere made of the apocrypha; rather they are a fabrication of the heretics, who write them down when it pleases them and generously assign to them an early date of composition in order that they may be able to draw upon them as supposedly ancient writings and have in them occasion to deceive the guileless.

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## Irenaeus of Lyons (b. 120/140 Asia Minor - d. 200/203 CE)

Relatively little is known of the life of Irenaeus. As a boy he had, as he delighted to point out, listened to the sermons of the great bishop and martyr, [Polycarp of Smyrna](#), who was regarded as



This image is taken from the [Encyclopædia Britannica](#). A [larger version](#) is available.

a disciple of the apostles themselves. Here he came to know, 'the genuine unadulterated gospel', to which he remained faithful throughout his life. Perhaps he also accompanied Polycarp on his journey to Rome in connection with the controversy over the date of celebrating Easter (154 CE). Later he went as a missionary to southern Gaul, where he became a presbyter at Lyons. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [St. Irenaeus](#).

Irenaeus was absent from the city when the persecution there reached its zenith. It seems that he had been sent to Rome by the Gallican churches in order to confer with Pope Eleutherus, perhaps as a mediator in the Montanist disputes. Evidently Irenaeus stayed in Rome for just a short time, and soon after the end of the persecution we find him again in Lyons as the successor to Bishop Pothinus (178). When and how he died is unknown to us. Jerome and others state that he died as a martyr in the persecution under the Emperor Septimus Severus (202), but there is no certainty about this tradition.

In short, we know Irenaeus almost solely from his writings, and these have not been preserved in their entirety. These writings are:

Writing	Remarks	English Translation(s)
<i>The Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So Called</i> (also called <i>Adversus Haereses</i> )	original Greek fragments and only a Latin translation in its entirety (written ~180 CE)	<a href="#">[Richardson]</a> , <a href="#">Christian Classics</a> <a href="#">Ethereal Library</a> , <a href="#">Noncanonical</a> <a href="#">Homepage</a>
<i>The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching</i>	an Armenian translation discovered in 1907. This book was probably intended for the instruction of young candidates for Baptism.	<a href="#">[Irenaeus]</a>

The era in which Irenaeus lived was a time of expansion and inner tensions in the church. In many cases Irenaeus acted as mediator between various contending factions. The churches of Asia Minor (where he was probably born) continued to celebrate Easter on the same date (the 14th of Nisan) as the Jews celebrated Passover, whereas the Roman Church maintained that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday (the day of the Resurrection). Mediating between the parties, Irenaeus stated that differences in external factors, such as dates of festivals, need not be so serious as to destroy church unity.

Irenaeus adopted a totally negative and unresponsive attitude, however, toward [Marcion](#), a schismatic leader in Rome, and toward the [Valentinians](#), a fashionable intellectual Gnostic movement in the rapidly expanding church that espoused dualism. Because Gnosticism was overcome by the Orthodox Church, Gnostic writings were largely obliterated. In reconstructing Gnostic doctrines, therefore, modern scholars relied to a great extent on the writings of Irenaeus, who summarized the Gnostic views before attacking them. After the discovery of the Gnostic library near Nag Hammadi in Egypt in the 1940s (see [Robinson](#)), respect for Irenaeus increased. He was proved to have been extremely precise in his report of the doctrines he rejected.

The oldest lists of bishops also were countermeasures against the Gnostics,

who said that they possessed a secret oral tradition from Jesus himself. Against such statements Irenaeus maintains that the bishops in different cities are known as far back as the Apostles - and none of them was a Gnostic - and that the bishops provided the only safe guide to the interpretation of the Scriptures. With these lists of bishops the later doctrine of "the apostolic succession" of the bishops could be linked.

From these 2 sources we can appreciate the importance of Irenaeus as the first great Catholic theologian, the champion of orthodoxy against Gnostic heresy, and a mediating link between Eastern and Western churches.

Regarding the New Testament canon, one finds in *Adversus Haereses* quotations from all the books of the New Testament with the exception of:

Philemon, II Peter, III John, and Jude

He also considered these writings, not in the present New Testament, of value:

[I Clement](#) , [Shepherd of Hermas](#)

However, the following he considered heretical:

[Gospel of Truth](#)

For a summary of his opinions see the [Cross Reference Table](#). Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly [4 Gospels](#), and used numerological arguments surrounding the number 4, such as the [4 covenants](#), for support.

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## Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Matthew

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. .... Matthew proclaims his human birth, saying, 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham,' and, 'The birth of Jesus Christ was in this manner'

. for this Gospel is manlike, and so through the whole Gospel [Christ] appears as a man of a humble mind, and gentle. (3.11.8)

According to the lists in [\[Hoh\]](#), Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, quotes 626 times from all 4 Gospels. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly [4 Gospels](#).

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## Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Mark

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. .... But Mark takes his beginning from the prophetic Spirit who comes on men from on high saying, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet,' showing a winged image of the gospel. Therefore he made his message compendious and summary, for such is the prophetic character. (3.11.8)

According to the lists in [\[Hoh\]](#), Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, quotes 626 times from all 4 Gospels. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly [4 Gospels](#).

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## Irenaeus and the Gospel according to Luke

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. .... That according to Luke, as having a priestly character, began with the priest Zacharias offering incense to God. For the fatted calf was already being prepared which was to be sacrificed for the finding of the younger son. (3.11.8) [c.f. Luke 15:23]

According to the lists in [\[Hoh\]](#), Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, quotes 626

times from all 4 Gospels. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly [4 Gospels](#).

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## Irenaeus and the Gospel according to John

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. For that according to John expounds his princely and mighty and glorious birth from the Father, saying, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,' and, 'All things were made by him, and without him nothing was nothing made' . Therefore this Gospel is deserving of all confidence, for such indeed is his person. (3.11.8)

According to the lists in [\[Hoh\]](#), Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, quotes 626 times from all 4 Gospels. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly [4 Gospels](#).

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## Irenaeus and Acts

According to the lists in [\[Hoh\]](#), Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, quotes from Acts 54 times.

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## Irenaeus and the Pauline Epistles

According to [\[Grant\]](#) p. 154, the frequencies of quotations and allusions to the Pauline Epistles in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* are given by:

<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	<b>quotations/allusions</b>
Romans	84
I Corinthians	102
II Corinthians	18
Galatians	27
Ephesians	37
Philippians	13
Colossians	18
I Thessalonians	2
II Thessalonians	9
I Timothy	5
II Timothy	5
Titus	4
Philemon	0

---

## Irenaeus and Hebrews

According to [\[Grant\]](#) p. 154, there seems to be an allusion to Hebrews 1:3 in *Adversus Haereses* 2.30.9.

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## Irenaeus and James

According to [\[Grant\]](#) p. 155, there are 2 possible allusions to James in *Adversus Haereses*. They are in 4.16.2 (James 2:23) and 5.1.1 (James 1:18,22).

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## Irenaeus and I Peter

According to [\[Grant\]](#) p. 155, there is an allusion to I Peter in *Adversus Haereses* 5.7.2. This allusion and more might be listed in [\[Hoh\]](#).

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## Irenaeus and I-II John

According to [\[Grant\]](#) p. 155, Irenaeus cites I John in *Adversus Haereses*, 3.16.5 and, three paragraphs later, refers back to the same epistle but quotes from II John. He may have regarded I-II John as one letter; perhaps he was quoting from memory. More allusions might be listed in [\[Hoh\]](#).

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## Irenaeus and the Revelation of John

According to the lists in [\[Hoh\]](#), Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses*, quotes 29 times from the Revelation of John.

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## Irenaeus and the Four Gospels

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

The Gospels could not possibly be either more or less in number than they are. Since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is spread over all the earth, and the pillar and foundation of the Church is the gospel, and the Spirit of life, it fittingly has four pillars, everywhere breathing out incorruption and revivifying men. From this it is clear that the Word, the artificer of all things, being manifested to men gave us the gospel, fourfold in form but held together by one Spirit. As David said, when asking for his coming, 'O sinner upon the cherubim, show yourself'. For the cherubim have four faces, and their faces are images of the activity of the Son of God. For the first living creature, it says, was like a lion, signifying his active and princely and royal character; the second was

like an ox, showing his sacrificial and priestly order; the third had the face of a man, indicating very clearly his coming in human guise; and the fourth was like a flying eagle, making plain the giving of the Spirit who broods over the Church. Now the Gospels, in which Christ is enthroned, are like these. (3.11.8)

The 4 creatures are allusions to Revelations 4:7-8. Irenaeus goes on to compare them to the Gospels according to [John](#), [Luke](#), [Matthew](#), and [Mark](#) respectively. The Davidic quotation is from Psalms 80:1.

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## Irenaeus and the Four Covenants

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

... As is the activity of the Son of God, such is the form of the living creatures; and as is the form of the living creatures, such is also the character of the Gospel. For the living creatures were quadriform, and the gospel and the activity of the Lord is fourfold. Therefore four general covenants were given to mankind: one was that of Noah's deluge, by the [rain] bow; the second was Abraham's, by the sign of circumcision; the third was the giving of the Law by Moses; and the fourth is that of the Gospel, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (3.11.8)

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## Irenaeus and I Clement

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

When the blessed apostles had founded and built up the Church, they handed over the ministry of the episcopate to Linus. Paul mentions this Linus in his Epistles to Timothy. Anencletus succeeded him. After him Clement received the lot of the episcopate in the third place from the apostles. He had seen the apostles and associated with them, and still had their preaching sounding in his ears and their tradition before



his eyes -- and not he alone, for there were many still left in his time who had been taught by the apostles. In this Clement's time no small discord arose among the brethren in Corinth, and the Church in Rome sent a very powerful letter to the Corinthians, leading them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which they had recently received from the apostles, which declared one almighty God, maker of heaven and earth and fashioner of man, who brought out the people from the land of Egypt; who spoke with Moses; who ordained the Law and sent the Prophets; and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. Those who care to can learn from this Writing that he was proclaimed by the churches as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so understand the apostolic tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is older than those present false teachers who make up lies about another God above the Demiurge and maker of all things that are. (3.3.3)

The last sentence makes it clear that Irenaeus regards I Clement as authoritative.

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## Irenaeus and the Shepherd of Hermas

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, "First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence. He who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one." [Book 2, First Commandment, of the Shepherd of Hermas]. Rightly also has Malachi said among the prophets: "Is it not one God who hath established us? Have we not all one Father?" (4.20.2. of *Adversus Haereses*)

This passage, where Irenaeus calls the Shepherd of Hermas 'scripture', is mentioned by [\[Grant\]](#) p. 153 and [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 155.

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## Irenaeus and the Gospel of Truth

Irenaeus reports in *Adversus Haereses*:

But the followers of Valentinus, putting away all fear, bring forward their own compositions and boast that they have more Gospels than really exist. Indeed their audacity has gone so far that they entitle their recent composition the Gospel of Truth, though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the apostles, and so no Gospel of theirs is free from blasphemy. For if what they produce is the Gospel of Truth, and is different from those which the apostles handed down to us, those who care to can learn how it can be shown from the Scriptures themselves that [then] what is handed down from the apostles is not the Gospel of Truth. (3.11.9)

---

## Irenaeus and the Gospel of Judas

Irenaeus writes in *Adversus Haereses*:

Others again declare that Cain derived his being from the Power above, and acknowledge that Esau, Korah, the Sodomites, and all such persons, are related to themselves. On this account, they add, they have been assailed by the Creator, yet no one of them has suffered injury. For Sophia was in the habit of carrying off that which belonged to her from them to herself. They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthly and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas. (1.31.1)

This condemnation is mentioned in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) p. 386.

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## Montanism, and Montanus (2nd - 3rd century CE)

Montanism, also known as the Cataphrygian Heresy and the New Prophecy, was a heretical movement founded by the prophet Montanus that arose in the Christian Church in Phrygia, Asia Minor, in the 2nd century. Subsequently it flourished in the West, principally in Carthage under the leadership of [Tertullian](#) in the 3rd century. It had almost died out in the 5th and 6th centuries, although some evidence indicates that it survived into the 9th century.

The Montanist writings have been lost. The chief sources for the history of the movement are the *[Ecclesiastical History](#)* of [Eusebius](#), the writings of Tertullian and Epiphanius, and inscriptions, particularly those in central Phrygia.

Little is known about Montanus. Before his conversion to Christianity, he apparently was a priest of the Oriental ecstatic cult of Cybele, the mother goddess of fertility. He appeared at Ardabau, a small village in Phrygia, in the year 156 according to Epiphanius, or if we follow [Eusebius](#), in 172. He fell into a trance and began "prophesy under the influence of the Spirit". Claiming to be the voice of the Holy Spirit, he announced the fulfillment of the New Testament promise of the Pentecost and the imminent Second Coming of Christ. He was soon joined by two young women, Prisca (or Priscilla) and Maximilla, who left their husbands and also began to prophesy.

Their pronouncements were written down and gathered together as sacred documents similar to the words of Old Testament prophets or the sayings of Jesus. About a score of such oracles have survived, plainly showing the ecstatic character of this form of utterance, in that the prophet does not speak in his or her name as a human being, but the Spirit of God is the speaker. Epiphanius quotes Montanus as saying, 'I am neither an angel nor

an envoy, but I the Lord God, the Father, have come'. Such pronouncements were made still more impressive by the manner in which they were presented. According to Epiphanius, a ceremony was held frequently in the churches of [Pepuza](#) when 7 virgins, dressed in white and carrying torches, entered and proceeded to deliver oracles to the congregation. He comments that 'they manifest a kind of enthusiasm that dupes those who are present, and provokes them to tears, leading to repentance'.

The movement spread throughout Asia Minor. Inscriptions, some the earliest Christian ones in Asia Minor, have shown that many towns were almost completely converted to Montanism. Phrygia traditionally had been a center of religious mystery rites of Cybele and her consort Attis, whose devotees engaged in frenetic dancing. Hence Montanus and his followers began to be called Phrygians or Cataphrygians. After the first enthusiasm had waned, however, the followers of Montanus were found mainly in the rural districts.

The essential principle of Montanism was that the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, whom Jesus had promised in the Gospel according to John, was manifesting himself to the world through Montanus and the prophets and prophetesses associated with him. This did not seem at first to deny the doctrines of the church or to attack the authority of the bishops. The church acknowledged the charismatic gift of some prophets.

It soon became clear, however, that the Montanist prophecy was new. True prophets did not, as Montanus did, deliberately induce a kind of ecstatic intensity and a state of passivity and then maintain that the words they spoke were the voice of the Spirit. It also became clear that the claim of Montanus to have the final revelation of the Holy Spirit implied that something could be added to teaching of Christ and the Apostles and that, therefore, the Church had to accept a fuller revelation.

The belief in the imminent Second Coming of Christ was not confined to Montanists, but with them it took a special form that gave their activities the character of a popular revival. They believed the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21) was soon to descend on the Earth at the little Phrygian town of [Pepuza](#). The prophets and many followers went there, and many Christian communities were almost abandoned.

Convinced that the end of the world was at hand, Montanus laid down a rigoristic morality to purify Christians and detach them from their material

desires. The new asceticism included the renunciation of marriage (later mitigated to one marriage), arduous fasting, an emphasis on virginity, the desire for martyrdom, and a stringent penitential regiment for the forgiveness of sin. In contrast to the Gnostic sects of the east that also taught an elitist enlightenment, Montanus' original doctrine eschewed sophisticated principles and speculative mysticism and initially intended his teaching to be a spiritual revival through the new prophecy within orthodox Christianity. On one hand, he honored tradition by acknowledging the biblical basis for Christian belief and accepting its apocalyptic (end of the world) themes. On the other hand, he reacted against the uniformity of a hierarchically organized Christianity that did not allow for the expression of individual religious inspiration. Official criticism of Montanus and his movement consequently emphasized the new prophecy's unorthodox ecstatic expression and his neglect of the bishop's divinely appointed rule. A feature offensive to some in the Church was the admission of women to positions of leadership.

When it became obvious that the Montanist doctrine was an attack on the Catholic faith, the bishops of Asia Minor gathered in synods and finally excommunicated the Montanists, probably ~177. Montanism then became a separate sect with its seat of government at [Pepuza](#). It maintained the ordinary Christian ministry but imposed on it higher orders of patriarchs and associates who were probably successors of the first Montanist prophets. In the West, its most illustrious convert was [Tertullian](#) in Carthage; but it declined in importance early in the 5th century. It continued in the East until severe legislation against Montanism by Emperor Justinian I (527-565) essentially destroyed it, but some remnants evidently survived into the 9th century.

Regarding the New Testament canon, the Montanist heresy caused the great Church to develop a mistrust of all recent writings of a prophetic nature. Not only did such a feeling tend to discredit several apocalypses that may have been, in various parts of the Church, on their way to establishing themselves, but even the Revelation of John was sometimes brought under a cloud of suspicion because of its usefulness in supporting the 'New Prophecy'.

The above was taken from the Encyclopedia Britannica and [\[Metzger\]](#).

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## Arianism, and Arius (4th century CE)

Arianism was a Christian heresy first proposed early in the 4th century by the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. It affirmed that Christ is not truly divine but a created being. The fundamental premise of Arius was the uniqueness of God, who is alone self-existent and immutable. The Son, who is not self-existent, cannot be God.

An ascetical, moral leader of a Christian community in the area of Alexandria, Arius attracted a large following through a message integrating Neoplatonism, which accented the absolute oneness of the divinity as the highest perfection, with a literal, rationalist approach to the New Testament texts. Christ was viewed as the most perfect creature in the material world, whose moral integrity led him to be "adopted" by God as a son but who nevertheless remained a secondary deity, or Logos substantially unlike the eternal, uncreated Father and subordinate to his will. Because the Godhead is unique, it cannot be shared or communicated so that the Son cannot be God. Because the Godhead is immutable, the Son, who is mutable (being represented in the Gospels as subject to growth and change) cannot be God. The Son must, therefore, be deemed a creature who has been called into existence out of nothing and has had a beginning. Moreover, the Son can have no direct knowledge of the Father since the Son is finite and of a different order of existence. This thesis was publicized ~323 through the poetic verse of his major work, *Thalia* (Banquet), and was widely spread by the tactic of popular songs written for laborers and travelers.

According to its opponents, especially [Athanasius](#), Arius' teaching reduced the Son to a demigod, reintroduced polytheism (since the worship of the Son was not abandoned), and undermined the Christian concept of redemption since only Christ who was truly God could redeem the world. From the outset, the controversy between both parties took place upon the common basis of the Neoplatonic concept of *ousia* ("substance" or "stuff"),



which was foreign to the New Testament itself.

Following an exchange of condemnations (323-324) between the Arians and various gatherings of clergy in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, Constantine, eager for unity and peace, sent emissaries to mediate the conflict. This effort failed, and he summoned the Council of Nicaea (the First Ecumenical Council) in May 325, to settle what he termed "a fight over trifling and foolish verbal differences". The bishops issued a creed to safeguard orthodox Christian belief. This creed states that the Son is *homoousion to Patri* (of one substance with the Father), thus declaring him to be all that the Father is: he is completely divine. When Arius refused to sign the creed, the bishops declared him a heretic and exiled him and the Arian leaders. This seemed to end the controversy, but it was only the beginning of a long-protracted dispute.

Although the Arian leaders were exiled, they tried by intrigue to return to their churches and sees and to banish their enemies. They were partly successful. Influential support from colleagues in Asia Minor and from Constantia, the Emperor's daughter, succeeded in effecting Arius' return from exile and his readmission into the church after consenting to a compromise formula, despite the opposition from [Athanasius](#). Shortly before he was to be reconciled, however, Arius collapsed and died while walking through the streets of Constantinople in 336.

When Constantine died in 337, Constans became emperor in the West and Constantius II became emperor in the East. The former was sympathetic to the orthodox Christians and the latter to the Arians. At a council held at Antioch (341), an affirmation of faith that omitted the *homoousion* clause was issued. Another council was held at Sardica in 342, but little was achieved by either council.

In 350 Constantius II became sole ruler of the empire, and under his leadership the Nicene party (orthodox Christians) was largely crushed. The extreme Arians then declared that the Son was *anomoios* (unlike) the Father. These Anomoeans succeeded in having their views endorsed at Sirmium in 357, but their extremism stimulated the moderates, who asserted that the Son was *homoiousios* (of similar substance) with the Father, and conservatives, who asserted that the Son was *homoios* (like) the Father. Constantius at first supported the Homoiousians but soon transferred his support to the Homoenas, led by Acacius. Their views were approved in 360 at Constantinople, where all previous creeds were rejected, the term *ousia* ("substance" or "stuff") was repudiated, and a statement of

faith was issued stating that the Son was "like the Father who begot him".

After Constantius' death in 361, the orthodox Christian majority in the West consolidated its position. The Arian persecution conducted by Emperor Valens (364-378) in the East and the success of the teaching of Basil the Great of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus led the Homoiousian majority in the East to realize its fundamental agreement with the Nicene party. When the emperors Gratian (367-383) and Theodosius I (379-395) took up the defense of orthodoxy, Arianism collapsed. In 381 the Second Ecumenical Council met at Constantinople. Arianism was proscribed and the Nicene Creed was approved.

Although this ended the heresy in the empire, Arianism continued among some of the Germanic tribes to the end of the 7th century. In modern times some Unitarians are virtually Arians in that they are unwilling either to reduce Christ to a mere human being or to attribute to him a divine nature identical with that of the Father. The Christology of the Jehovah's Witnesses is also a form of Arianism; they regard Arius as a forerunner of Charles Taze Russell, the founder of their movement.

The above was taken from the Encyclopædia Britannica.

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## The Apostolic Fathers

The following writings form the collection called the Apostolic Fathers:

- [I Clement](#)
- II Clement
- Letters of Ignatius (7)
- Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians
- Martyrdom of Polycarp
- [Didache](#)
- [Epistle of Barnabas](#)
- [Shepherd of Hermas](#)
- Epistle to Diognetus
- Fragments of Papias
- Quadratus

Four of these -- I Clement, Epistle of Barnabas, Didache, Shepherd of Hermas -- are part of this survey because they were cited approvingly by an early Christian authority. The others are not included, but the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp are used to determine their opinions on the New Testament canon. English translations of the Apostolic Fathers are in the books [\[LHH\]](#) and [\[Richardson\]](#) , and online at [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#) and [CCAT Public Archive](#) .

Although the term *Apostolic Fathers* seems to have been used as early as the 6th century by Severus, the Monophysite patrician of Antioch, its modern significance dates to 1672, when French scholar J. B. Cotelier published 2 volumes entitled *Sanctorum Patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt, Barnabae, Clementis, Hermae, Ignatii, Polycarpi, opera edita et inedita, vera et suppositicia* (Holy Fathers who were active in Apostolic Times ...). In 1693 William Wake issued an English translation

of these documents under the title, *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers*. In 1765 A. Gallandi expanded the collection to include the *Epistle to Diognetus*, the *Fragments of Papias*, and *Quadratus*. The last widely accepted addition was the *Didache*, following its discovery in 1873.

The title 'Apostolic Fathers' refers to a circle of authors who are supposed to have had personal knowledge of some of the apostles, but did not actually belong to their number. It does not represent any ancient tradition; there are no traces of any early collection of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, and each of them has a separate literary history. They span the period from about 95 to about 150 CE, and are witnesses to the development of different emphases and styles of Christianity.

The Apostolic Fathers seldom make express citations from New Testament writings. On the contrary we have allusions and reminiscences that are often difficult to identify and delicate to interpret. At most, the Apostolic Fathers disclose for this or that geographic area an amount of knowledge and use of several 1st century documents that later came to be gathered into what we know as the New Testament.

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## **Codex Hierosolymitanus** (1056 CE)

This manuscript, usually designated **H**, was discovered in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, the Metropolitan of Nicomedia, in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre at Constantinople. It was written by a scribe, Leo, in 1056. A photographic facsimile was published by J. Rendel Harris in 1887. The manuscript contains the [Didache](#), the [Epistle of Barnabas](#), [I Clement](#), II Clement, and the long form of the [Ignatian letters](#).

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## The Bibles of Constantine

There is another piece of evidence that bears on the subject of the canon - even though we may not know how to interpret it. About the year 322 CE, the emperor Constantine, wishing to promote and organize Christian worship in the growing number of churches in Constantinople, directed [Eusebius](#) to have 50 copies of the sacred Scriptures made by practiced scribes and written legibly on prepared parchment. At the same time the emperor informed him, in a letter still preserved to us, that everything necessary for doing this was placed at his command, among other things two public carriages for conveying the completed manuscripts to the emperor for his personal inspection. According to Eusebius:

Such were the emperor's commands, which were followed by the immediate execution of the work itself, which we sent him in magnificent and elaborately bound volumes of a threefold and fourfold form. (*Vita Const.* 4.36.37)

The exact meaning of the concluding words has been taken in a half dozen different senses. Two of the most popular are, that the pages had 'three or four columns of script', or that as the copies were completed, they were sent off for the emperor's inspection 'three or four at a time'. The astonishing thing is that Eusebius, who took care to tell us at some length about the fluctuations of opinion in regard to certain books, has not one word to say regarding the choice he made on this important occasion. Of course, 50 magnificent copies, all uniform, could not but exercise a great influence on great influence on future copies, at least within the bounds of the patriarchate of Constantinople, and would help forward the process of arriving at a commonly accepted New Testament in the East.

Some have suggested that the [codex Sinaiticus](#) is one of the 50 bibles commissioned by Constantine, but its Alexandrian type of text makes this

unlikely.

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## Closing the Canon in the West

An eclectic, but not ecumenical, synod at Rome was convened in the year 382 CE. This Roman synod must have devoted itself specially to the matter of the canon. The result of its deliberations, presided over, no doubt, by the energetic Pope Damasus himself, are lost to us. Some hold they are partially preserved in the [Decretum Gelasianum](#) though this is disputed. The New Testament canon presented there agrees with the present one (although, for some reason, [\[Metzger\]](#) p. 188 says the Revelation of John is omitted).

Pope Innocent I, in 405 CE, reaffirmed the canon in a letter to Bishop Exsuperius of Toulouse.

During the Middle Ages the Church in the West received the Latin New Testament from the Vulgate, and the subject of the canon was seldom discussed. However, we still find a certain elasticity in the boundaries of the New Testament. The most notable addition in some manuscripts is the [Epistle to the Laodiceans](#). It was not until the Council of Florence (1439-43) that the See of Rome delivered for the first time a categorical opinion on the Scriptural canon. In consequence of the efforts of this Council to bring about reunion with the Eastern Orthodox Church, which sought support from the West against the Turks, who were nearing Constantinople, Pope Eugenius IV published a bull setting forth the doctrines of the unity of the Old and New Testament, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and a statement of their extent. In the list of 27 books of the New Testament there are 14 Pauline Epistles, that to the Hebrews being last, with the book of Acts coming immediately before the Revelation of John. The Epistle to the Laodiceans is not even mentioned.

One century later, the disrupting influences of opinions about the Scriptures expressed by such Catholics as Cardinal Cajetan, the humanist Erasmus,



and by German, Swiss, and French Protestants, prompted Pope Paul III to convene the Council of Trent in order to consider what, if any, moral and administrative reforms needed to be made within the Roman Catholic Church. On April 8 1546, by a vote of 24 to 15 with 16 abstentions, a decree (*De Canonicis Scripturis*) was issued in which, for the first time in the history of the Church, the question of the contents of the Bible was made an absolute article of faith and confirmed by anathema. In translation:

The holy ecumenical and general Council of Trent, ... following the example of the orthodox Fathers receives and venerates all the books of the Old and New Testament ... and also the traditions pertaining to faith and conduct ... with and equal sense of devotion and reverence (*pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia*) ... If, however, anyone does not receive these books in their entirety, with all their parts (*cum omnibus suis partibus*), as they are accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the ancient Latin Vulgate edition as sacred and canonical, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, let him be Anathema.

Among subsequent confessions of faith drawn up by Protestants, several identify by name the 27 books of the New Testament canon, including the French Confession of Faith (1559), the Belgic Confession (1561), and The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647). The Thirty-Nine Articles, issued by the Church of England in 1563, names the books of the Old Testament, but not the New Testament. None of the Confessional statements issued by any Lutheran church includes an explicit list of canonical books.

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## Closing the Canon in the East

The eastern churches had, in general, a weaker feeling than the western for the necessity of making a sharp delineation with regard to the canon. It was more conscious of the gradation of spiritual quality among the books that it accepted (e.g. the classification of [Eusebius](#)) and was less often disposed to assert that the books which it rejected possessed no spiritual quality at all.

As an example of the uncertainty in the east, the Trullan Synod of 691-692 CE endorsed these lists of canonical writings: the [Apostolic Canons](#) (~385 CE), the [Synod of Laodicea](#) (~363 CE ?), the [Third Synod of Carthage](#) (~397 CE), and the 39th Festal Letter of [Athanasius](#) (367 CE). And yet these lists do not agree. The Synod of Hippo Regius (393 CE) and the Synod of Carthage (419 CE) also addressed the canon and are discussed [here](#).

Similarly, the New Testament canons of the national churches of Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Egypt (The Coptic Church), and Ethiopia all have minor differences; see [\[Metzger\]](#) pp. 218-228 for details. The *Revelation of John* is one of the most uncertain books; it was not translated into Georgian until the 10th century, and it has never been included in the official lectionary of the Greek Church, whether Byzantine or modern.

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## The New Testament Books (canonical)

The scholarly literature on the New Testament books is (of course) huge and easily accessible. There is no attempt here to discuss them individually. Here is their approximate order of composition:

I and II Thessalonians	~50 CE
I and II Corinthians	54-56
Galatians	~56
Romans	56-57
Colossians	~61
Philemon	~61
Philippians	~62
Gospel according to Mark	65-70
Gospel according to Matthew	80-85
Acts and Gospel according to Luke	85-90
Hebrews	85-90
Gospel according to John	90-100
Revelation of John	~95
Ephesians, James, and I Peter	95-100
I, II, and III John	100-110
I and II Timothy and Titus	110-130
Jude, II Peter	130-150

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## The *Quo Vadis?* Legend

According to this well-known legend, the apostle Peter was fleeing from Rome when he met Christ on the Appian Way. Peter asked, "**Domine, quo vadis?**" ("Lord, whither are you going?") and the Lord replied, "**I am coming to be crucified again.**" Peter understood these words to signify that the Lord was to suffer again in the death of his disciple; so he turned and went back to Rome, where he was martyred.

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## Hypertext Conventions

Since these pages are intended for monitor viewing, they make some use of color. Almost all the early writings considered here were either considered as part of the New Testament canon, or provide some evidence on how the New Testament canon was selected.

Quotations from writings considered (by some authority) as part of the New Testament - canonical or apocryphal books - are in **dark red**, for example:

5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6. But though, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (*Matthew Chapter 6*)

Similarly, quotations from early writings that provide some evidence on how the canonical New Testament writings were selected are in **dark blue**, for example:

... There is current also (an epistle) to the Laodiceans, another to the Alexandrians, forged in Paul's name for the sect of Marcion, and several others, which cannot be received in the catholic Church; for it will not do to mix gall with honey..  
(from the [Muratorian Canon](#))

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## Revision History

**October 16, 2001**

Entire site given a new domain name **www.ntcanon.org** and rehosted on a Linux PC.

**October 1, 2001**

A major revamping was done. The files were split so there is now one file for each subject. Easier navigation was added, with the help of server side includes. Fixed many broken links, and added new colors.

**July 25, 2001**

Added more material to Closing the Canon in the West, Closing the Canon in the East, and the Decretum Gelasianum.

**December 5, 1999**

Added another link.

**August 7, 1998**

Added more English translations of most [Apocryphal New Testament Writings](#).

**July 22, 1998**

Added translation of the Gospel of Peter by [Henry Barclay Swete](#).

**March 17, 1998**

Added two more icons from [Holy Transfiguration Monastery](#).

**February 23, 1998**

Fixed links to the latest translations at Christian Classics Ethereal



Library. Fixed English translation of Tertullian's "*De Cultu Feminarum*".

**December 17, 1997**

Added links to English translations of more writings of the authorities.

**November 11, 1997**

Added a few new images, and links to other sites.

**May 1, 1997**

The RTF files were converted to HTML using Word 97. More HTML polishing, including revising the links, was done with a plain ASCII text editor. An AWK program helped with the cross-reference table. The resulting HTML files were then hosted on [best.com](http://best.com). The section "Closing the Canon in the East" is new.

**January 11, 1994**

The first version was in the form of Windows 3.x RTF and HLP hypertext files. Here are some technical details on how this document was created. All the text was entered using Word for Windows 2.0; I did not use any special Word macro packages (e.g. WHAT) or 3rd party tools (e.g. RoboHelp). The small bitmaps and the icon were drawn with the Borland Resource Editor. The map was scanned at 150 dpi from [LHH](#) and corrected with Microsoft Paintbrush. The low resolution map was made with the Resource Editor. The hotspots were added with the Microsoft Hot Spot Editor. Most keywords were inserted automatically using a master list of keywords and some AWK programs I wrote that operate as RTF filters. The project was managed using a standard MAKEFILE. All the jumps and popups were done by hand. I used HCP version 3.10.504 as the help compiler.

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[Links to Other Sites](#)

## Links to Other Sites

- [Canon of the New Testament](#) from the online Catholic Encyclopedia. 1908.
- [The Formation of the New Testament Canon](#) by Richard Carrier  
A good historical summary.
- [The Canon of the Bible](#) by Larry Taylor  
Covers both testaments, the meaning of 'canon', and details from the Reformation.
- [Early Christian Writings](#) by Peter Kirby  
"... the most complete online collection of New Testament Apocrypha, Gnostic Gospels, apocryphal Acts, early Church Fathers, and other books of ancient Christianity with translations and commentary."
- [Canon of The New Testament](#) by W. Hartono
- [Noncanonical Homepage](#) at The Wesley Center For Applied Theology at Northwest Nazarene University  
This site has English translations of many non-canonical writings.
- [Interpreting Ancient Manuscripts Web](#) designed by Timothy W. Seid, Ph.D.  
Has some images of [Codex Sinaiticus](#).
- [Guide to Early Church Documents](#) Institute for Christian Leadership

- [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#) Calvin College  
Early Church Fathers.
- [Fathers of the Church](#) New Advent Catholic Supersite  
The 38-volume Edinburgh edition of writings from the first 800 years of the Church.
- [The Emergence of the New Testament Canon](#) from the Orthodox  
Christian Information Center
- [Evangelicals and The Canon of The New Testament](#) Biblical Studies  
Foundation
- [The Gospel of Barnabas](#)  
The site has thorough discussion of this medieval forgery, which is therefore outside the scope of my site.

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## Epistle of Barnabas (Alexandria, 70-135 CE)

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is a theological tract (not an epistle) that discusses questions that have confronted the followers of Jesus since the earliest days of his ministry: How ought Christians to interpret the Jewish Scriptures? What is the nature of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism?

Writing at a time when the level of antagonism between church and synagogue still ran high, the anonymous author of the "epistle" is concerned to prove that the death of Christ on the cross is a sacrifice that fulfills a plan set forth in the Old Testament (9.7-9). Throughout his interpretation of the Old Testament he takes a radically anti-Jewish attitude that was unique in primitive Christian literature. In a sustained attack upon Judaism, the writer declares that the distinctive enactments of the Mosaic Law, including animal sacrifices and the material temple, are mistakes arising from Jewish blindness and reliance upon an evil angel (9.4). By means of allegorical interpretation he imposes upon the Old Testament, including even the dietary laws in Leviticus, a meaning totally foreign to the intention of the original authors. The author attempts to show that only Christians understand the true meaning of the Scriptures (10.12) and that they are the true and intended heirs of God's covenant. In short, the *Epistle of Barnabas* is a good and early example of what became the dominant method of interpreting the Bible in the early and medieval church.

It is generally agreed that the author was from [Alexandria](#), in view of his fondness of the allegorical approach for which Alexandria was well-known and the fact that all the earliest evidence for the existence of the document derives from there. It appears to have been written after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE (16.3-5) but before the city was rebuilt by Hadrian following the revolt of 132-135 CE. Within these limits it is not possible to be more precise.

The text has been reconstructed on the basis of the following witnesses:

- [codex Sinaiticus](#), 4th. c. (Greek)
- [codex Hierosolymitanus](#) 1056 CE (Greek)
- 9 late related MSS (Greek)
- a papyrus fragment of 9.1-6 (Greek)
- translation of chapters 1-17 only (Latin)

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## Shepherd of Hermas (middle of 2nd century CE)

The *Shepherd of Hermas* was one of the most popular books produced in the early Church, and for a time it was frequently quoted and regarded as inspired. The book is a picturesque religious allegory, in most of which a rugged figure dressed like a shepherd is Hermas' guide. From this the book took its name, 'The Shepherd'. Comprising a rambling *mélange* of 5 Visions, 12 Mandates, and 10 Similitudes, the book is characterized by strong moral earnestness. It is primarily a call to repentance and adherence to a life of strict morality, addressed to Christians among whom the memory of persecution is still fresh., and over whom now hangs the shadow of another great tribulation.

The genre of Visions 1-4 is that of a Jewish-Christian apocalypse; except that the interpretation of the vision does not concern the end times, but the possibility of repentance because the end is not yet. The Mandates reflect the form of a typical Jewish-Hellenistic homily. The closest parallels to the Similitudes are the parables in the book of *I Enoch*. These parables, in which typically the telling of a parable is followed by a request for and granting of an interpretation, and finally blessings and curses upon those who either do or do not heed it, are more like allegorical similes than the more familiar parables of the synoptic Gospels.

The questions of date and authorship are still unresolved. Perhaps the least satisfactory resolution of the conflicting evidence is to suppose that Hermas was a younger contemporary of Clement and wrote (and perhaps published) sections of his rambling treatise at intervals over a considerable period of time, finally gathering them together in one volume toward the middle of the 2nd century. For more discussion of the evidence, see [\[Metzger\]](#) pp. 64-65 and [\[LHH\]](#) pp. 190-191.

The personality of Hermas is clearly revealed in the book. With garrulous

*naïveté* he relates all manner of intimate details concerning himself and his family. We learn that, as a Christian slave, he had been sold in Rome to a woman called Rhoda, who set him free. As a freedman he married, acquired a fortune (though not always by lawful transaction), and through ill luck had again been reduced to poverty. He tells us that during the persecution his children apostasized, that they betrayed their own parents, and that they led a disorderly life. Hermas depicts himself as slow of understanding but insatiable in curiosity, and at the same time as 'patient and good tempered, and always smiling', 'full of all simplicity and of great guilelessness' (*Vision* 1.2). We may conclude that he was a simple man of limited outlook, but genuinely pious and conscientious.

The text of the *Shepherd* has not been well preserved. Only 3 incomplete Greek manuscripts and a number of small fragments have been discovered, and no Greek text is available for nearly all of 107.3-114.5. The major extant witnesses are:

[codex Sinaiticus](#), 4th. c. (Greek) 1.1-31.6

codex Athous, 14-15th c (Greek) 1.1-107.2

P. Michigan 129, 3rd c., (Greek) 51.8-82.1

Vulgate translation (Latin) the text used for 107.3-114.5

MS (Ethiopic)

There are also many small fragments in Greek, and fragments of a Middle Persian translation have also been discovered. The book is fairly lengthy; an English translation can be found in [\[LHH\]](#) pp. 194-290.

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## Acts of Paul (Asia Minor, 185-195 CE)

The *Acts of Paul* is a romance that makes arbitrary use of the canonical Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Many manuscripts have survived, there is an English translation in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 2 pp. 237-265, but there is not yet a critical edition. The canon list in the 6th century [codex Claromontanus](#) includes it with an indication that it contains 3560 lines, somewhat longer than the canonical Acts with 2600 lines.

The author, so [Tertullian](#) tells us, was a cleric who lived in the Roman province of Asia in the western part of Asia Minor, and who composed the book about 170 CE with the avowed intent of doing honor to the Apostle Paul. Although well-intentioned, the author was brought up for trial by his peers and, being convicted of falsifying the facts, was dismissed from his office. But his book, though condemned by ecclesiastical leaders, achieved considerable popularity among the laity.

Certain episodes in the *Acts of Paul*, such as the 'Journeys of Paul and Thecla', exist in a number of Greek manuscripts and in half a dozen ancient versions. Thecla was a noble-born virgin from Iconium and an enthusiastic follower of the Apostle; she preached like a missionary and administered baptism. It was the administration of baptism by a woman that scandalized Tertullian and led him to condemn the entire book. In this section we find a description of the physical appearance of Paul:

A man small in size, with a bald head and crooked legs; in good health; with eyebrows that met and a rather prominent nose; full of grace, for sometimes he looked like a man and sometimes he looked like an angel.

Another episode concerns the Apostle and the baptized lion. Although



previously known from allusions to it in patristic writers, it was not until 1936 that the complete text was made available from a recently discovered Greek papyrus. Probably the imaginative writer had read Paul's rhetorical question: 'What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with the wild beasts at Ephesus?' (I Cor. 15:32). Wishing to supply details to supplement this allusion, the author supplies a thrilling account of the intrepid apostle's experience at Ephesus. Interest is added when the reader learns that some time earlier in the wilds of the countryside Paul had preached to that very lion and, on its profession of faith, had baptized it. It is not surprising that the outcome of the confrontation in the amphitheater was the miraculous release of the apostle.

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## Apocalypse of Peter (Egypt, ~135 CE)

The Apocalypse of Peter is best known for its lurid descriptions of the punishments of hell. It is an outstanding ancient example of that type of writing by means of which the pictorial ideas of Heaven and Hell were taken over into the Christian Church. In contrast to the Revelation of John which displays the final struggle and triumph of Jesus Christ, its interest no longer lies on the person of the Redeemer, but on the situation in the after-life, on the description of different classes of sinner, on the punishment of the evil and the salvation of the righteous. If the Apocalypse of Peter as a book lost its meaning in time, the ideas represented in it lived on in various ways -- Sybyllines II; Apocalypse of Paul; *apocalypsis seu visio Mariae virginis*; right up to the full tide of description in Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

For the identification of the Apocalypse of Peter and the assessment of its significance and influence, the citations in the Church Fathers are particularly important. Theophilus of Antioch (about 180 CE) alludes to a verse of the Akhmîm fragment (see below). [Clement of Alexandria](#) (before 215) twice quotes chapters 4 and 5. Methodius of Olympus (about 311) once quotes chapter 8. Macarius Magnes (about 400) quotes chapters 4 and 5 once each.

The full text has been known to us for only a century. During the excavations instigated by S. Grébaut in the winter of 1886/87 in cemetery A at al-Hawawis in the desert necropolis of Akhmîm, parchment leaves of the Greek version were discovered in the grave of a Christian monk. In addition to this fragment of text, some further unpaginated leaves were found with parts of the Book of Enoch and the [Gospel of Peter](#). The three texts, which are today in Cairo, are all from the same hand and were written in the 8th or 9th century. The Greek text, which occupies not quite half of the original book, was divided by Harnack into 34 verses. The

identification of the text results from a quotation adduced by [Clement of Alexandria](#) in his *Eclogae Propheticae*.

The Ethiopic translation has been known since 1910. A. Dillmann had already referred to the extensive Ethiopic translation of the Corpus Clementinum, which may go back to the 7th-8th century. S. Grébaud finally published Pseudo-Clementine literature from MS No 51 of the Abbadie collection, and added a French translation. It was however M. R. James who, in a fundamental study, first succeeded in classifying the Ethiopic text correctly.

We do not know the original text of the Apocalypse, the Greek and Ethiopic texts frequently diverge from each other.

The earliest possible date of origin can be determined through the date of 4 Esdras -- about 100 CE -- which was probably used in the Apocalypse of Peter and 2 Peter, the priority of which was demonstrated by F. Spitta. The latest possible date, using the quotations of Theophilus above, is 180. We thus come, with H. Weinel, if in interpreting the parable of the fig-tree in c. 2 we also relate the Jewish Antichrist who persecutes the Christians to Bar Chocba, to approximately the year 135 as the probable time of origin.

The Apocalypse presumably came into being in Egypt (c.f. [Clement](#)); the reference to Egyptian worship of animals also points in this direction. In this connection however we must refer above all to the ancient Egyptian Peter tradition. Starting from a first rendering into Coptic, the Ethiopic translation probably came into being - as usual - through Arabic versions. To this extent our Ethiopic text, linguistically not altogether unexceptional, is only the last in a series, with all the imponderables that entails.

In its description of heaven and hell the Apocalypse draws on the Orphic-Pythagorean mystery religions. The motif of the river of fire, certainly goes back to ancient Egypt. The ideas of the last judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the world by fire, etc., are to be traced back, through the medium of Jewish Apocalyptic (the Book of Enoch, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, Wisdom of Solomon, etc.) to oriental origins.

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## Gospel of Thomas (eastern Syria, ~150 CE)

Hippolytus of Rome, in his report on the Naassenes (*Philos.* v. 7, 200-235 CE), mentions a 'Gospel of Thomas' and quotes from it (the quotation probably has some connection with logion 4 from the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* discussed below). About 233 CE [Origen](#) mentions it among the heterodox gospels. His testimony was taken over in a Latin translation or paraphrase by [Jerome](#), Ambrose, and Venerable Bede. [Eusebius](#), probably following Origen, includes a Gospel of Thomas in the heretical category. It is also mentioned by [Cyril of Jerusalem](#), and Philip of Side (about 430), and appears in the [Stichometry of Nicephorus](#). It is certain that the gospel was known and used in Manicheism.

With the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library in 1945, we know of a collection of 114 logia (sayings), written in Sahidic, which is described in the colophon as 'Gospel according to Thomas'. The introduction confirms this title.

Codex II from Nag Hammadi can be dated to about 400 CE. It can however be demonstrated that it had a significantly older Coptic *Vorlage*. As early as 1952 H.-Ch. Puech established that parts of this gospel had already long been known in Greek, the correspondence with the Coptic manuscript is as follows:

Codex II from Nag Hammadi (Coptic)	~400 CE	logia 1-114
Oxyrhynchus Papyrus I (Greek)	before 200 CE	logia 26-30, 77, 31-33
Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654 (Greek)	?	logia 1-7

For discussion of the relationship between the Greek and Coptic manuscripts, see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) ref. v. 1 p. 111, and [\[Robinson\]](#) ref. pp. 124-125. It is doubtful whether this gospel was originally composed in Aramaic and then translated into Greek, although many of the sayings, like the oldest sayings of the canonical gospels, were certainly first circulated in Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

*The Gospel of Thomas* probably originated about the middle of the 2nd century in eastern Syria, although admittedly the collected sayings material may in part go back even into the 1st century.

The 114 sayings preserved in *The Gospel of Thomas* are of several types: wisdom sayings (proverbs), parables, eschatological sayings (prophecies), and rules for the community. They are ordered in a way that does not reveal any overall plan of composition. On occasion, small groups of sayings are kept together by similarity in form or by catchword association. The collection is similar to the hypothetical source **Q**. A large number of sayings have parallels in the canonical gospels, especially the Gospel according to John (13, 19, 24, 38, 49, 92). Some are known to occur also in non-canonical gospels, especially the [Gospel of the Hebrews](#) and the [Gospel of the Egyptians](#). However, a direct dependence upon another non-canonical gospel is very unlikely. If one considers the form and wording of the individual sayings in comparison with the form in which they are preserved in the New Testament, the *Gospel of Thomas* almost always appears to have preserved a more original form of the traditional sayings, or presents versions which are independently based on more original forms. More original and shorter forms are especially evident in the parables. One of the parables unique to this gospel, logion 97 (Empty Jar), was judged to probably be an authentic saying of Jesus by the Jesus Seminar, [\[FSB\]](#) p. 61. The English translation of the "Empty Jar":

(97) Jesus said: "The kingdom of the [Father] is like a certain woman who was carrying a [jar] full of meal. While she was walking [on the] road, still some distance from home, the handle of the jar broke and the meal emptied out behind her [on] the road. She did not realize it; she had noticed no accident. When she reached her house, she set the jar down and found it empty".

The *Gospel of Thomas* has also captured the popular attention far more than any non-canonical writing in this survey. Sayings from it have appeared in popular books, and it is a common subject in college Bible classes and Catholic study groups.

Date CE	Place	Manuscripts	English Translation(s)
~150	eastern Syria	Codex II Nag Hammadi (Coptic, Sahidic dialect) Oxyrhynchus Papyrus I (Greek) Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654 (Greek) Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 655 (Greek)	<a href="#">[Robinson]</a> pp. 126-138 <a href="#">[Elliot]</a> pp. 135-147 <a href="#">Alexander Walker Esq.</a> [New Advent] <a href="#">Stephen Patterson and Marvin Meyer</a> <a href="#">Thomas O. Lambdin</a> <a href="#">Lambdin and Layton</a> <a href="#">W. R. Schoedel</a> <a href="#">Stuart D. Shoemaker</a> <a href="#">Paterson Brown</a> <a href="#">K. C. Hanson</a> <a href="#">Berlin Working Group for Coptic Gnostic Writings</a> <a href="#">Ecumenical Coptic Project</a> <a href="#">Interlinear Coptic/English</a> <a href="#">Interlinear Greek/English</a>

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## Acts of Andrew (150-200 CE)

The oldest direct mention of the *Acts of Andrew* is by [Eusebius](#) who lists it among the writings that are written by heretics and are absurd and impious. The Coptic Papyrus Utrecht I, which contains a translation of a section from the *Acts of Andrew*, confirms that it was known in Egypt in the 4th century (the papyrus is dated to this period). In his *Panarion* Epiphanius reports that the writing was used by the Encratites, the Apostolici, and the Origenists. The *Acts of Andrew* was probably written in the second half of the 2nd century. The place of origin is unknown.

Between the 3rd and the 9th century it became known and read everywhere, in Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Armenia, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Gaul, and Spain. It was particularly successful in circles of a dualistic and ascetic tendency, especially among the Manicheans and Priscillianists. It was condemned in the [Decretum Gelasianum](#), but this did not result in its disappearance. Rather it lived on in the form of revisions and extracts. The trail vanishes in the West in the 6th century, in the East in the 9th.

The *Acts of Andrew* has not come down to us in the primary form of their original Greek text. The English translation in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 2 pp. 118-151 is taken from these witnesses:

<i>Liber de miraculis</i> by Gregory of Tours	complete except for suppressed speeches
P. Utrech 1 (Coptic)	corresponds to c. 18 of the previous work
Armenian Martyrdom	final part
5 Greek recensions	final part

Extracts handed down in Greek      various fragments

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## Gospel of Matthias (Alexandria, 100-150 CE)

Nothing from the *Gospel of Matthias* survives to us. The book is mentioned by [Origen](#), [Eusebius](#), Ambrose, Jerome, and the Venerable Bede. It also appears in two lists: the 6th century South Gallic list known as the [Decretum Gelasianum](#), and the 7th-century Byzantine list known as [The Catalogue of the Sixty Canonical Books](#).

The *Gospel of Matthias* was probably written in the 1st half of the 2nd century in Alexandria, or at any rate in Egypt. It may be the same as the [Traditions of Matthias](#). For discussion of this controversy see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 1 p. 385.

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## Gospel of Peter (Syria, 100-130 CE)

Down to 1886 scholars were aware of a *Gospel of Peter*, but not so much as a single quotation from it was known. [Origen](#) casually refers to it in his *Commentary on Matthew* (10.17) when discussing the brethren of Jesus, and [Eusebius](#) records the negative opinion expressed by Bishop Serapion of Antioch after he had read a copy of this apocryphal gospel:

... most of it is indeed in accordance with the true teaching of the Savior, but some things are additions to that teaching, which items also we place below for your benefit.

Unfortunately, Eusebius, to whom we are indebted for a copy of this part of Serapion's letter, did not quote the specific points which the bishop found objectionable; he apparently brought it into connection with 'Docetists'. In another place, [Eusebius](#) classifies the Gospel of Peter as one of the heretical writings.

In the winter of 1886-7 a large fragment of the Greek text of the *Gospel of Peter* was discovered in a tomb of a monk at Akhmîm in Upper Egypt. It is a manuscript from the 8th century - an [online text](#) is available. A smaller 2nd-3rd century fragment was discovered later at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt.

The text, which is translated in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 1 pp. 223-226, tells of the passion, death, and burial of Jesus, and embellishes the account of his resurrection with details concerning the miracles that followed. The responsibility for Christ's death is laid exclusively on the Jews, and Pilate is exonerated. Here and there we find traces of the Docetic heresy, and perhaps this is the reason why Jesus' cry of dereliction on the cross is given in the form '**My Power, my Power, why have you forsaken me?**'.

Written probably in Syria between 100-130 CE the Gospel of Peter shows acquaintance with all 4 canonical Gospels but seems, in general, to have taken only limited notice of them. According to the investigation made by [\[Denker\]](#) pp. 58-77, it appears that almost every sentence of the passion narrative was composed on the basis of Scriptural references in the Old Testament, particularly in Isaiah and the Psalms. He argues that the work is a product of Jewish Christianity written sometime between the two Jewish uprisings. For differing opinions see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 1 pp. 217-222.

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## Didache (~70 CE)

The *Didache* ("The Teaching") is one of the most fascinating yet perplexing documents to emerge from the early church. The title (in ancient times "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles") was known from references to it by [Athanasius](#), [Didymus](#), and [Eusebius](#), and Serapion of Thmuis (4th century) has a quotation from it in his Eucharistic prayer [[Richardson](#)] p. 163. But no copy was known until 1873, when Bryennios discovered the [codex Hierosolymitanus](#), which contained the full text of the *Didache* which he published in 1883. Since then it has been the focus of scholarly attention to an extent quite out of proportion to its modest length. Yet such basic information as who wrote and where and when remain as much as mystery as when it was first discovered.

The document is composed of two parts: (1) instruction about the "Two Ways", and (2) a manual of church order and practice. The "Two Ways" material appears to have been intended as a summary of basic instruction about the Christian life to be taught to those who were preparing for baptism and church membership. In its present form it represents the Christianization of a common Jewish form of moral instruction. Similar material is found in a number of other Christian writings from the 1st to the 5th centuries, e.g. the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didascalia*, the *Apostolic Church Ordinances*, the *Summary of Doctrine*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Life of Schnudi*, and *On the Teaching of the Apostles* (or *Doctrina*), some of which are dependent on the *Didache*. The interrelationships between these documents has not been completely worked out.

The second part consists of instructions about food, baptism, fasting, prayer, the Eucharist, and various offices and positions of leadership. In addition to providing the earliest evidence of a mode of baptism other than immersion, it records the oldest known Christian Eucharist prayers and a form of the Lord's Prayer quite similar to that found in the Gospel

according to Matthew.

The document closes with a brief apocalyptic section that has much in common with the so-called Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark 13; Matthew 24-25; Luke 24).

Dating the *Didache* is difficult because there is a lack of hard evidence and it is a composite document. It may have been put into its present form as late as 150 CE, though a date considerably closer to the end of the 1st century seems more probable. The materials from which it was composed, however, reflect the state of the church at an even earlier time. A very thorough commentary, [\[Audet\]](#), suggests about 70 CE and he is not likely to be off by more than a decade.

Egypt or Syria are mentioned most often as possible places of origin, but the evidence is indirect and circumstantial. The reference to "mountains" (9.4) would appear to suggest a Syrian (or Palestinian) provenance. The final editing, however, may have occurred elsewhere.

The English translation in [\[LHH\]](#) pp. 149-158 is taken from these witnesses:

<a href="#">codex Hierosolymitanus</a>	1056 CE (Greek)	complete
translation, 5th century MS (Coptic)		10.3b-12.2a
a papyrus fragment of 9.1-6 (Georgian)		complete
translation, 3rd century? MS (Latin)		Two Ways

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## Polycarp of Smyrna (born ~70 -- died (martyred) ~155 in Rome)

Polycarp, Greek bishop of Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey) was the leading 2nd-century figure in Roman Asia by virtue of his intermediary position between the apostolic and patristic ages and his work during the initial

appearance of the fundamental theological literature of Christianity. A Catholic Encyclopedia article is online at [St. Polycarp](#).

His major writing, *The Letter to the Philippians*, is intimately connected with the epistles and martyrdom of [Ignatius](#). About 110 CE, while en route to Rome where he suffered martyrdom, Ignatius passed through Smyrna and was warmly greeted by the church and its bishop. Subsequently he was taken by his guards to Philippi, where local Christian leaders visited him. After his departure they wrote to Polycarp requesting him to send them copies of the epistles that Ignatius had written to him and to several churches in Asia Minor. This he did, adding a covering letter of his own. In it Polycarp urges the reader to stand fast in the faith, to avoid heretical teachings, to look to the examples of martyrdom suffered by Ignatius and others, and to persevere in philanthropy and good works. He concludes by saying that he is sending them copies of the epistles of Ignatius as they requested, and asks them to send him the latest news about Ignatius and his companions.

By his letter, and by his widespread moral authority, Polycarp combated the [Marcionites](#) (from Rome) and frustrated their attempts to establish Churches in Roman Asia. That sect advocated a rejection of the Hebraic



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Old Testament deity for the New Testament God. He also struggled against the [Valentinian](#) communities, esoteric Gnostic groups that claimed religious salvation exclusively through their arcane spiritual knowledge. Polycarp's anti-Gnostic thesis, an exemplary statement of post-apostolic theology, refuted the sectarian argument that God's incarnation in Christ, his death, and Resurrection were all imaginary phenomena of purely moral or mythological significance.

Despite the proximity in time between Ignatius and Polycarp, as well as the obvious affinity of their spirits in Christian fortitude, one recognizes in Polycarp a temperament much less oriented to ecclesiastical polity and possessing a much wider acquaintance with the New Testament. Proportionate to the length of what they wrote, Polycarp has two or three times more quotations and reminiscences from the New Testament than does Ignatius. Of 112 Biblical reminiscences, about 100 are from the New Testament with only a dozen from the Old Testament. Polycarp does not refer to older Christian writings by name, but *The Letter to the Philippians* has quotations (of approval) from these writings:

- [Gospel according to Matthew](#)
- [Gospel according to Mark](#)
- [Gospel according to Luke](#)
- [Acts](#)
- [I Corinthians](#)
- [II Corinthians](#)
- [Galatians](#)
- [Ephesians](#)
- [Philippians](#)
- [I Thessalonians](#)
- [II Thessalonians](#)
- [I Timothy](#)
- [II Timothy](#)
- [Hebrews](#)
- [I Peter](#)
- [I John](#)
- [III John](#)

In fact, *The Letter to the Philippians* is a mosaic of quotations from both Old Testament and Christian writings. The letter is important for its early testimony to the existence of various other New Testament texts. English



translations of the letter are in the books [\[LHH\]](#) and [\[Richardson\]](#) , and online at [Noncanonical Homepage](#) and [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#). The quotations below follow [\[Richardson\]](#). For a summary of this evidence see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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## Polycarp and the Gospel according to Matthew

Polycarp		Matthew
2:3	"Judge not, that you be not judged; forgive and you will be forgiven; be merciful, that you may be shown mercy; the measure you give will be the measure you get" ....	7:1,2
7:2	..."to lead us not into temptation"...	6:13
7:2	..."The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak".	26:14
12:3	..."for those who persecute and hate you"	5:44

---

## Polycarp and the Gospel according to Mark

Polycarp		Mark
5:2	..."a servant of all"....	9:35

---

## Polycarp and the Gospel according to Luke

Polycarp		Luke
2:3	..."blessed are the poor and those persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God".	6:20

---



## Polycarp and Acts

Polycarp		Acts
1:2	... "whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of Hades".	2:24
2:1	... "judge of the living and the dead",...	10:42

---

## Polycarp and Romans

Polycarp		Romans
6:2	... "everyone shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ and each of us shall give an account of himself".	14:10,12

---

## Polycarp and I Corinthians

Polycarp		I Corinthians
4:3	... "the secrets of the heart".	14:25
5:3	... "neither fornicators nor the effeminate nor homosexuals will inherit the Kingdom of God", ...	6:9,10
10:1	... "steadfast and immovable" ...	15:58
11:3	... "do we not know that the saints will judge the world", as Paul teaches?	6:2

---

## Polycarp and II Corinthians

Polycarp		II Corinthians
2:2	For "he who raised him from the dead will raise us also", ...	4:14
4:1	... let us arm ourselves "with the weapons of righteousness", ...	6:7
6:1	...but "always taking thought for what is honorable in the sight of God and men" ...	8:21
10:1	...in "the gentleness of the Lord preferring one another", and despising no one.	10:1

## Polycarp and Galatians

Polycarp		Galatians
3:3	... -- "which is a mother of us all", ...	4:26
5:1	... "God is not mocked", ...	6:7
12:3	...and in "his Father who raised him from the dead".	1:1

## Polycarp and Ephesians

Polycarp		Ephesians
1:3	... "you are saved by grace, not because of works", ...	2:5,8,9
3:1	... "the word of truth".	1:13
12:1	... as it is said in these Scriptures "be angry but sin not" and "let not the sun go down on your anger".	4:26
12:3	"Pray for all the saints".	6:18

## Polycarp and Philippians

Polycarp		Philippians
2:1	... "to whom he subjected all things, whether in heaven or on earth", ...	3:21
9:1	... "did not run in vain",..	2:16
12:3	..."the enemies of the cross",..	3:18

---

## Polycarp and I Thessalonians

Polycarp		I Thessalonians
11:2	"Shun evil of every kind".	5:22

---

## Polycarp and II Thessalonians

Polycarp		II Thessalonians
11:4	..."do not consider such persons as enemies",...	3:15

---

## Polycarp and I Timothy

Polycarp		I Timothy
4:1	But "the love of money is the beginning of all evils".	6:10
4:1	... "we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out", ...	6:7

12:3	"Pray also for emperors and magistrates and rulers", ...	2:1
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## Polycarp and II Timothy

Polycarp		II Timothy
5:2	..."we shall also reign with him"...	2:12
9:2	For they "loved not this present world", ...	4:10
11:4	"May the Lord grant them true repentance".	2:25

## Polycarp and Hebrews

Polycarp		Hebrews
6:3	So then let us "serve him with fear and all reverence", ...	12:28
12:2	May God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and "the eternal High Priest" himself, the Son of God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth and in all gentleness ...	6:20, 7:3

## Polycarp and I Peter

Polycarp		I Peter
1:3	In him, "though you have not seen him, you believe with inexpressible and exalted joy", -- ...	1:8,12
2:1	"Therefore, girding your loins, serve God in fear" ...	1:13

2:1	... "believing on him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory" ...	1:21
2:2	... "not returning evil for evil or abuse for abuse", ...	3:9
5:3	... "every passion of the flesh wages war against the Spirit", ...	2:11
7:2	... "watching unto prayer" ...	4:7
8:1	... "who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, who committed no sin, neither was guile found on his lips" ....	2:24
10:1	... "loving the brotherhood" ....	2:17
10:1	... "cherishing one another" ....	3:8

## Polycarp and I John

Polycarp		I John
7:1	For "whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is antichrist", and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross "is of the devil"; ...	4:2,3 3:8

## Polycarp and III John

Polycarp		III John
10:1	... "fellow companions in the truth"; ...	1:8

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## **Gospel of the Hebrews** (Egypt, mid 2nd century CE)

All that survives to us from the 'Gospel of the Hebrews' are several quotations made by [Clement](#), [Origen](#), Jerome, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Jerome took a lively interest in this book, an Aramaic copy of which he found in the famous library at Caesarea in Palestine. More than once he tells us (and with great pride) that he made translations of it into Greek and Latin. Unfortunately, these translations have been lost. According to the [Stichometry of Nicephorus](#), it comprised 2200 lines, which is only 300 fewer than the length of the *Gospel according to Matthew*.

The time and place of origin are disputed, but since Clement used it in the last quarter of the 2nd century, it is usually dated to about the middle of that century. Egypt is indicated as its place of origin by the fact that its principal witnesses are the Alexandrians Clement and Origen, by the religio-historical character of two of the fragments, and by the conception of Jesus as the Son of the Holy Spirit, which is documented for Egypt by the Coptic Epistle of James. The original language of the gospel suggests that it was drawn up for Hebrew and Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians in Palestine and Syria.

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## Acts of John (Ephesus, 150-200 CE)

The *Acts of John* purports to give an eyewitness account of the missionary work of the apostle John in and around Ephesus; it may therefore be of Ephesian provenance. It probably dates to the 2nd half of the 2nd century. Although no complete text is extant, we have considerable portions in Greek and in Latin. The [Stichometry of Nicephorus](#) gives its length as 2500 lines, the same number as for the Gospel according to Matthew. An English translation is in [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 2 pp. 172-212.

The author of the *Acts of John*, said to be Leucius, a real or fictitious companion of the apostle John, narrates his miracles, sermons, and death. The sermons display unmistakable Docetic tendencies, especially in the description of Jesus and the immateriality of his body:

.... Sometimes when I meant to touch him [Jesus], I met with a material and solid body; but at other times when I felt him, his substance was immaterial and incorporeal, as if it did not exist at all ... And I often wished, as I walked with him, to see his footprint, whether it appeared on the ground (for I saw him as it were raised up from the earth), and I never saw it. (§ 93)

The author also relates that Jesus was constantly changing shape, appearing sometimes as a small boy, sometimes as a beautiful man; sometimes bald-headed with a long beard, sometimes as a youth with a pubescent beard (§ 87-89).

The book includes a long hymn (§ 94-96), which no doubt was once used as a liturgical song (with response) in some Johannine communities. Before he goes to die, Jesus gathers his apostles in a circle, and, while holding one another's hands as they circle in a dance around him, he sings a hymn to the

Father. The terminology of the hymn is closely related to that of the Johannine Gospel, especially its prologue. At the same time, the author gives the whole a Docetic cast.

Besides presenting theologically-oriented teaching, the author knows how to spin strange and entertaining stories. There is for example, the lengthy account of the devout Drusiana and her ardent lover Callimachus in a sepulchre (§ 63-86), which was no doubt intended to provide Christians with an alternative to the widely-read libidinous story of the Ephesian widow and the guard at her late husband's tomb. For a lighter touch the author entertains his readers with the droll incident of the bedbugs (§ 60-61).

Although the *Acts of John* is without importance for the historical Jesus and the apostle John, it is nevertheless valuable for tracing the development of popular Christianity. It is, for example, the oldest source recording the celebration of the Eucharist for the dead (§ 72).

The *Acts of John* may have been composed by a member of the Hellenistic cultivated classes, who drew upon various literary genres and in so doing, without any specific attachment to a concrete community, sought to propagate a Christianity as he understood it, as the expression of certain aspirations of a philosophical attitude to the world which he had held even before his conversion.

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# Sumer, Land of Gozer

**Gozer the Traveler**

**Gozer the Destructor**

**Gozer the Gozarian**

Wait for a sign from Gozer the Traveler; he will come in one of the pre-chosen forms.

During the rectfication of the Voldrani, the Traveler came as a large and moving Tor.

Then, during the third reconciliation of the last of the Machetrik Supplicants,

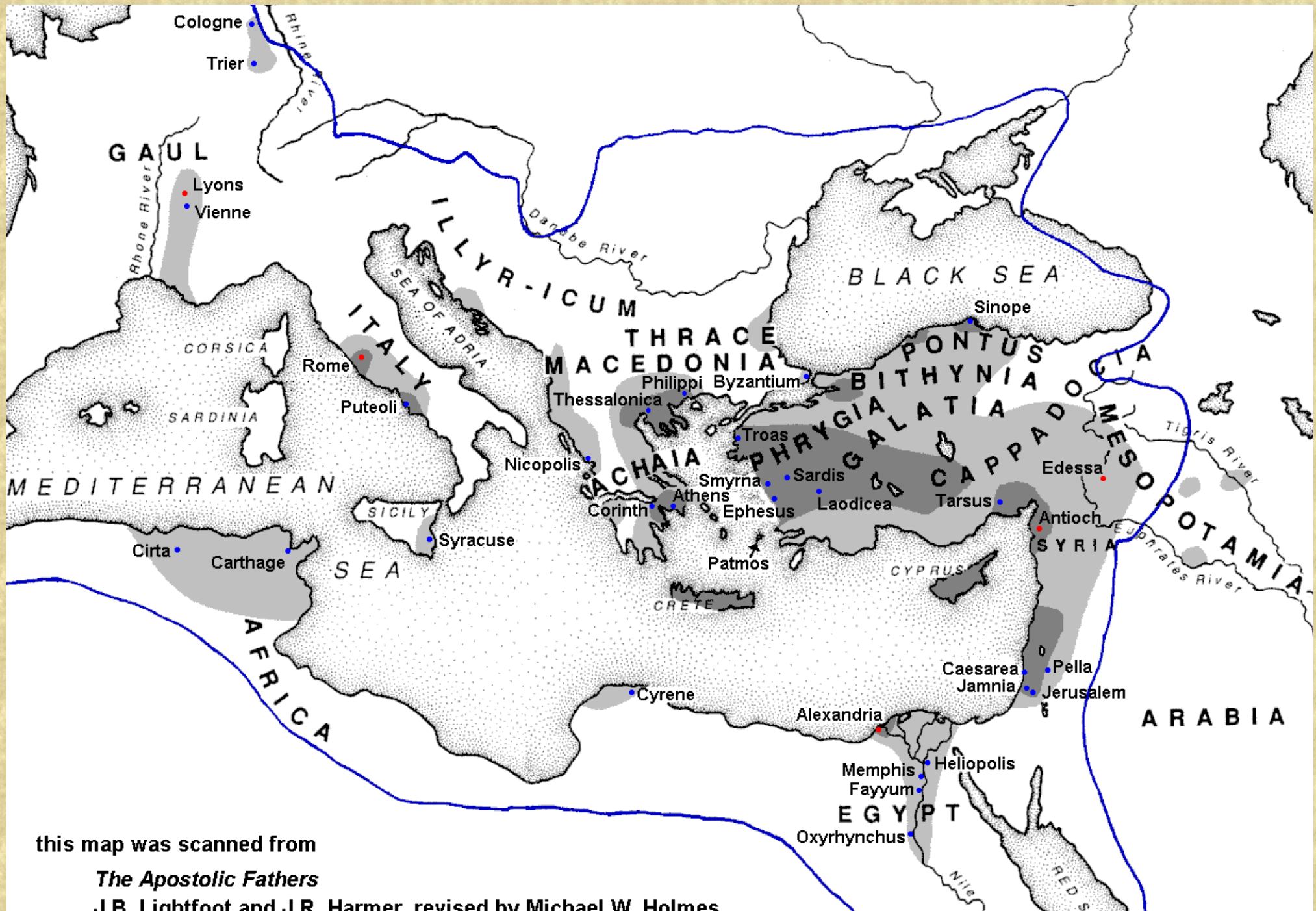
they chose a new form for him -- that of a Giant Slor!

Many Shevs and Zuls knew what it was to be roasted in the depths of the Slor that day I can tell you!

[\*return to map\*](#)

# The Spread of Christianity

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



this map was scanned from

*The Apostolic Fathers*

J.R. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer revised by Michael W. Holmes

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Baker Book House. 1989.



-  Extent of Christian communities by the 1st century CE
-  Extent of Christian communities by 185 CE (the time of Irenaeus)
-  Early centers of Christianity
-  Early centers of Christianity, with a link to more information
-  Boundary of the Roman Empire for most of the 1st and 2nd centuries CE

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## The Muratorian Canon

In a manuscript of the 8th century in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, probably written in Bobbio, L.A. Muratori (1672-1750) discovered a catalogue (in Latin) of the NT writings with comments. He published this text, called after him the *Canon Muratori*, in 1740. Four fragments of the Canon were found in 1897 in four manuscripts of the 11th and 12th centuries in Montecassino. The beginning and probably also the end of the catalogue are missing. Presumably the text derives from the West (Rome?) and was composed about 200 CE. The Latin version goes back to a Greek original.

The following translation is intended to adhere closely to the line divisions of the Latin text.

## .....  
 at which however he was present and so he has set it down.  
 The third Gospel book, that according to Luke.  
 This physician Luke after Christ's ascension (resurrection?),  
 since Paul had taken him with him as an expert in the way (of  
 the teaching),  
 composed it in his own name  
 according to (his) thinking. Yet neither did he himself see  
 the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to  
 ascertain it,  
 so he begins  
 to tell the story from the birth of John.  
 The fourth of the Gospels, that of John, (one) of the disciples.  
 When his fellow-disciples and bishops urged him,  
 he said: Fast with me from today for three days, and what  
 will be revealed to each one  
 let us relate to one another. In the same night it was

revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that, whilst all were to go over (it), John in his own name should write everything down. And therefore, though various rudiments (or: tendencies?) are taught in the several Gospel books, yet that matters nothing for the faith of believers, since by the one and guiding (original?) Spirit everything is declared in all: concerning the birth, concerning the passion, concerning the resurrection, concerning the intercourse with his disciples and concerning his two comings, the first despised in lowliness, which has come to pass, the second glorious in kingly power, which is yet to come. What wonder then if John, being thus always true to himself, adduces particular points in his epistles also, where he says of himself: What we have seen with our eyes and have heard with our ears and our hands have handled, that have we written to you. For so he confesses (himself) not merely an eye and ear witness, but also a writer of all the marvels of the Lord in order. But the acts of all apostles are written in one book. For the 'most excellent Theophilus' Luke summarizes the several things that in his own presence have come to pass, as also by the omission of the passion of Peter he makes quite clear, and equally by (the omission) of the journey of Paul, who from the city (of Rome) proceeded to Spain. The epistles, however, of Paul themselves make clear to those who wish to know it which there are (i.e. from Paul), from what place and for what cause they were written. First of all to the Corinthians (to whom) he forbids the heresy of schism, then to the Galatians (to whom he forbids) circumcision, and then to the Romans, (to whom) he explains that Christ is the rule of the scriptures and moreover their principle,



he has written at considerable length. We must deal with these severally, since the blessed apostle Paul himself, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes by name only to seven churches in the following order: to the Corinthians the first (epistle), to the Ephesians the second, to the Philippians the third, to the Colossians the fourth, to the Galatians the fifth, to the Thessalonians the sixth, to the Romans the seventh. Although he wrote to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians once more for their reproof, it is yet clearly recognizable that over the whole earth one church is spread. For John also in the Revelation writes indeed to seven churches, yet speaks to all. But to Philemon one, and to Titus one, and to Timothy two, (written) out of goodwill and love, are yet held sacred to the glory of the catholic Church for the ordering of ecclesiastical discipline. There is current also (an epistle) to the Laodiceans, another to the Alexandrians, forged in Paul's name for the sect of Marcion, and several others, which cannot be received in the catholic Church; for it will not do to mix gall with honey. Further an epistle of Jude and two with the title (or: two of the above mentioned) John are accepted in the catholic Church, and the Wisdom written by friends of Solomon in his honour. Also of the revelations we accept only those of John and Peter, which (latter) some of our people do not want to have read in the Church. But Hermas wrote the Shepherd quite lately in our time in the city of Rome, when on the throne of the church of the city of Rome the bishop Pius, his brother, was seated. And therefore it ought indeed to be read, but it cannot be read publicly in the Church to the other people either among the prophets, whose number is settled, or among

the apostles to the end of time.  
But we accept nothing whatever  
from Arsinous or Valentinus and Miltiades(?), who have also  
composed a new psalm book for Marcion,  
together with Basilides of Asia Minor,  
the founder of the Cataphrygians.

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## Eusebius of Caesarea (b. ~260 CE probably in Caesarea, d. ~340 CE)

Although Eusebius leaves much to be desired as an exegete or an apologist for Christianity, he had one quality that was lacking in all his predecessors and contemporaries -- the instinct for historical research. His [Ecclesiastical History](#) gives us access to a host of sources and traditions otherwise long since lost. The 'Father of Church History' had at his disposal the library at Caesarea which [Origen](#) had built up after he had been forced to leave Alexandria and take up residence in Palestine. Pamphilus, an enthusiastic adherent of Origen, had sought out and added many volumes to the library, and Eusebius, the pupil, coworker and friend of Pamphilus, became his successor when he died (~310) as a martyr in the Diocletian persecution.

In the congenial setting offered by a well-stocked library in Caesarea, as well as by visiting the Christian library at Jerusalem, founded in the previous century by Bishop Alexander (*Hist. eccl.* 6.20.1), Eusebius indulged his appetite for Christian antiquities, and began the task of collecting and organizing material covering the history of the Church, chiefly in the East, during the previous 3 centuries.

Regarding Eusebius and the New Testament canon, we will use only a single well-known passage in his *Ecclesiastical History* ([3.25.1-7](#)). In the absence of any official list of the canonical writings, Eusebius finds it simplest to count the votes of his witnesses, and by this means to classify all the writings into four categories:

**Class**

**writings**

**symbol**



<i>homologoumena</i> (recognized)	... the holy quaternion of the Gospels, which are followed by the book of the Acts of the Apostles. After this must be reckoned the Epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former Epistle of John, and likewise the Epistle of Peter must be recognized. After these must be put, if it really seems right, the Apocalypse of John, .....	✓
<i>antilegomena</i> (disputed)	Of the disputed books, which are nevertheless familiar to the majority, there are extant the Epistle of James, as it is called; and that of Jude; and the second Epistle of Peter; and those that are called the Second and Third of John, ....	?
<i>notha</i> (spurious)	... the Acts of Paul, and the Shepherd, as it is called, and the Apocalypse of Peter; and, in addition to these, the extant Epistle of Barnabas, and the Teaching of the Apostles [Didache], as it is called. And, in addition, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem right. ... And among these some have counted also the Gospel of the Hebrews, ....	✗
heretical	... such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or even of some others besides these, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles.	✗

Despite Eusebius' good intentions, he has been unable to present a tidy listing. For example, he lists the Revelation of John in both the recognized and spurious classes (our table shows it as recognized). For more discussion of these problems, see [\[Metzger\]](#) pp. 201-206. For a visual

summary of Eusebius' classification see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

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## **The Canon of Eusebius (from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 3.25.1-7)**

[recognized]

At this point it seems appropriate to summarize the writings of the New Testament which have already been mentioned. In the first place must be put the holy quaternity of the Gospels, which are followed by the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

After this must be reckoned the Epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former Epistle of John, and likewise the Epistle of Peter must be recognized. After these must be put, if it really seems right, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time.

[disputed]

These, then, [are to placed] among the recognized books. Of the disputed books, which are nevertheless familiar to the majority, there are extant the Epistle of James, as it is called; and that of Jude; and the second Epistle of Peter; and those that are called the Second and Third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another of the same name.

[spurious]

Among the spurious books must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the Shepherd, as it is called, and the Apocalypse of Peter; and, in addition to these, the extant Epistle of Barnabas, and the Teaching of the Apostles [Didache], as it is called. And, in addition, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seems right. (This last as I said, is rejected by some, but others count it among the recognized books.) And among these some have counted also the Gospel of the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews who have accepted Christ take a special pleasure.

[heretical]

Now all these would be among the disputed books; but nevertheless we have felt compelled to make this catalogue of them, distinguishing between those writings which, according to the tradition of the Church, are true and genuine and recognized, from the others which differ from them in that they are not canonical, but disputed, yet nevertheless are known to most churchmen. [And this we have done] in order that we might be able to know both these same writings and also those which the heretics put forward under the name of the apostles; including, for instance, such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or even of some others besides these, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles. To none of these has any who belonged to the succession of ecclesiastical writers ever thought it right to refer in his writings.

Moreover, the character of the style also is far removed from apostolic usage, and the thought and purport of their contents are completely out of harmony with true orthodoxy and clearly show themselves that they are the forgeries of heretics. For this reason they ought not to be reckoned among the spurious books, but are to be cast aside as altogether absurd and impious.

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## **Codex Sinaiticus** (4th century)

This manuscript, usually designated **S**, was discovered in 1859 by C. von Tischendorf at the Monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of Mt. Sinai (in the south central Sinai Peninsula) after a partial discovery of 43 leaves of a 4th-century biblical codex there in 1844. Though some of the Old Testament is missing, a whole 4th-century New Testament is preserved, with the Epistle of Barnabas and most of the Shepherd of Hermas at the end. There were probably 3 hands and several later correctors.

Tischendorf convinced the monks that giving the precious manuscript to Tsar Alexander II of Russia would grant them needed protection of their abbey and the Greek Church. Tischendorf subsequently published **S** at Leipzig and then presented it to the Tsar. The manuscript remained in Leningrad until 1933, during which time the Oxford University Press in 1911 published a facsimile of the New Testament portion from photographs of the manuscript taken by Kirsopp Lake, an English biblical scholar. The manuscript was sold in 1933 by the Soviet government to the British Museum for £100,000.

The text type of **S** is in the Alexandrian group, although it has some Western readings. Later corrections representing attempts to alter the text to a different standard probably were made about the 6th or 7th century at Caesarea. More discussion and images are online at [Interpreting Ancient Manuscripts Web](#).

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## **Peshitta** (the Bible of the Syrian Church)

At [Edessa](#), capital of the principality of Osrhoëne (in eastern Syria), and western Mesopotamia neither Latin nor Greek was understood. Therefore, the native language Syriac (a Semitic language related to Aramaic) was used in Christian writings. The political fortunes of Edessa present a remarkable contrast to those of other centers of Christianity. Until 216 CE in the reign of the Emperor Caracalla, Edessa lay outside the Roman Empire. Christianity seems to have reached the Euphrates valley about the middle of the 2nd century, that is, while the country was still an independent state. Since its people did not speak Greek, like their neighboring Syrians in [Antioch](#), it is not surprising that the Christianity of Edessa began to develop independently, without the admixture of Greek philosophy and Roman methods of government that at an early date modified primitive Christianity in the West and transformed it into the amalgam known as Catholicism.

According to early traditions and legends embodied in the *Doctrine of Addai* (~400 CE), the earliest New Testament of the Syriac speaking Church consisted of the *Diatesseron*, the Epistles of Paul, and Acts. The *Diatesseron* was written by Tatian by weaving the 4 canonical Gospels together into a coherent and continuous account. Tatian was born of pagan parents in the land of the Assyrians and received an education in Greek culture and its philosophical systems. Tatian came to Rome, made the acquaintance of [Justin Martyr](#), and converted to Christianity. While there, he composed the *Diatesseron* about 150 CE. The original language of the *Diatesseron* (certainly either Old Syriac or Greek) is still a much-debated question. The term *diatesseron* borrowed from musical terminology and designated a series of 4 harmonic tones. It was Tatian's private judgment that the format of a fourfold harmony was the most convenient way in which to present the whole Gospel story at once instead of confusing people by offering them 4 parallel and more or less divergent narratives.

After Justin's martyrdom (~165 CE) Tatian broke with the Roman church, returned to Syria in 172, and founded the sect of the Encratites (i.e. the self-disciplined). This sect rejected matrimony as adultery, condemned the use of meat in any form, and substituted water for wine in the Eucharist service. While in the East Tatian introduced the *Diatesseron* among the local churches. His influence at Edessa must have been considerable, for he succeeded in getting his book read in the churches there, and afterwards its use spread throughout the region. It was quoted by Aphraat, Ephraem (who wrote a commentary on it), and other Syrian Fathers.

Because of Tatian's reputation as a heretic, however, a reaction set in against the use of his *Diatesseron*, and Bishop Rabbula of Edessa (d. 436 CE) instructed his priests to take care that in all the churches the 4 'separated' Gospels should be available and read. Theodoret, who became bishop of Cyrrhus on the Euphrates in upper Syria in 423, sought out and found more than 200 copies of the *Diatesseron*, which he 'collected and put away, and introduced instead of them the Gospels of the four evangelists'.

By the beginning of the 5th century, or slightly earlier, the Syrian Church's version of the Bible, the Peshitta ('simple' translation) was formed. For the New Testament it represented an accommodation of the Syrian canon with that of the Greeks. It contains 22 books - all of the present New Testament except:

II Peter, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation of John

For the eastern part of the Syrian Church this constituted the closing of the canon, for after the Council of Ephesus (431 CE) the East Syrians separated themselves as the Nestorians. There are many surviving manuscripts of the Peshitta, the oldest of which bears the date 442. For much more on Peshitta history, see the article at [The Encyclopedia of New Testament Textual Criticism](#). It is noteworthy that exactly these 22 books are cited by John Chrysostom (~347-407) and Theodoret (393-466) from the School of [Antioch](#). For a visual summary of these 22 books see the [Cross Reference Table](#).

Among the Western Syrians, however, there were closer ties with their neighboring Churches, and a further accommodation with the Roman church took place in the 6th-7th centuries when the Philoxenian and Harclean versions of the Peshitta were issued containing all 27 New Testament books. Yet, even so the West Syrian Church was slow in making

use of these parts of the New Testament.

Still today the official lectionaries followed by the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, with headquarters at Kottayam (India); and the Chaldean Syrian Church, also known as the Church of the East (Nestorian), with headquarters at Trichur (India); present lessons from only the 22 books of the original Peshitta.

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## Vulgate (from the Latin *editio vulgata* meaning "common version")

The Vulgate is the version of the Latin Bible, primarily translated from Hebrew and Greek by St. Jerome, used by the Roman



available.

This thumbnail image of *St. Jerome in his Study* by Claude Vignon is taken from the [Art Imagebase at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco](#). A [larger version](#) is

Catholic Church for more than 1000 years. In 382 Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome, the leading biblical scholar of his day, to produce an acceptable Latin translation of the Bible from the several divergent translations then in use. His revised Latin translation of the Gospels was delivered to the Pope in 384. Using the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament, he produced new Latin translations of the Psalms (the Gallican Psalter), the Book of Job, and some other books. Later, he decided the Septuagint was unsatisfactory and began translating the entire Old Testament from the original Hebrew, completing it ~405. The remainder of the New Testament was from older Latin versions, perhaps slightly revised by Jerome. For much more on Vulgate history, see the article at [The Encyclopedia of New Testament Textual Criticism](#). The Vulgate can be browsed online at the [ARTFL Project](#), and it can be downloaded from [The World](#).

There is little doubt that the first editions of the Vulgate contain the present 27 books of the New Testament. The list of the 27 is included in Jerome's *Epistle to Paulinus* (53.9), and is printed as a prologue in older editions of the Vulgate Bible. For further development of the Vulgate, see [Closing the Canon in the West](#). For a visual summary of the Vulgate canon see the



[Cross Reference Table.](#)

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## The Vulgate and the Epistle to the Laodiceans

The [Epistle to the Laodiceans](#) appears in more than 100 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate, including the oldest surviving manuscript, the celebrated Codex Fuldensis 546 CE, commissioned by Victor, bishop of Capua. The appearance in these Vulgate manuscripts may derive from Old Latin ones. There are about 10,000 extant manuscripts of the Vulgate, though only about 2,500 have been catalogued. Thus:

... for more than nine centuries this forged epistle hovered about the doors of the sacred Canon, without either finding admission or being peremptorily excluded. [\[Lightfoot\]](#) p. 297.

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St. Clement of Alexandria, detail of a stained-glass window, 1954. In Boe Memorial Chapel, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

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## Gospel of Truth (140-180 CE)

Irenaeus reports that the Valentinians used of the *Gospel of Truth* as scripture. Unfortunately, he reveals little about the content of the work, except that it differed significantly from the canonical Gospels. Scholars are divided as to whether the Nag Hammadi *Gospel of Truth* (for text see [\[Robinson\]](#)) derives from Valentinus. More like a meditation on the Christian life and salvation than a traditional gospel, the treatise shows little trace of the elaborate speculations that are associated with the Valentinian system. Some scholars, however, believe that these speculations are not emphasized in order to conciliate orthodox opinion. If so, a date of composition in the middle of the 2nd century would be established.

On the basis of literary and conceptual affinities between the Nag Hammadi text and the exiguous fragments of Valentinus, some scholars have suggested that Valentinus himself was the author. Whatever the precise date and authorship, the work was certainly composed in Greek in an elaborate rhetorical style, by a consummate literary artist.

Despite its title, this work is not a gospel of the sort found in the New Testament, since it does not offer a continuous narration of the deeds, teachings, passion, and resurrection of Jesus. The term "gospel" in the first line preserves its early sense of "good news". It defines the text's subject, not its genre, which is best understood as a homily. Like other early Christian homilies, such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, *The Gospel of Truth* alternates doctrinal exposition with paraenesis and like that canonical work, it reflects on the significance of the salvific work of Jesus from a special theological perspective.

*The Gospel of Truth's* combination of literary and conceptual sophistication with genuine religious feeling suggests much better than the rather dry accounts of Gnostic systems in the heresiologists why the teaching of

Valentinus and his school had such an appeal for many Christians of the 2nd century.

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## Preaching of Peter [Kerygma Petri] (Egypt, early 2nd century CE)

The *Preaching of Peter* (*Kerygma Petri* or simply KP) survives today only in fragments as quotations from [Clement](#) and [Origen](#). [Clement](#) quotes from it approvingly, but [Origen](#) does not. The small amount of extant text makes it almost impossible to voice any conjectures about the structure of this work. One can probably demonstrate a connection in terms of content between individual fragments, but a coherent text cannot be reconstructed out of this. It is also scarcely possible to show the original sequence of the fragments.

The KP is to be understood as a combination of ideas which occur in the New Testament (e.g. I Thess. 1:9f, Rom. 1:18ff; Acts 17) with elements which derive from Jewish apologetic. The significance of the KP seems to lie in the fact that here we have a middle term in the preaching tradition between the early Christian missionary preaching, which has left traces for example in Acts, and the Greek apologetic. It is the more regrettable that so few fragments of this important document have survived.

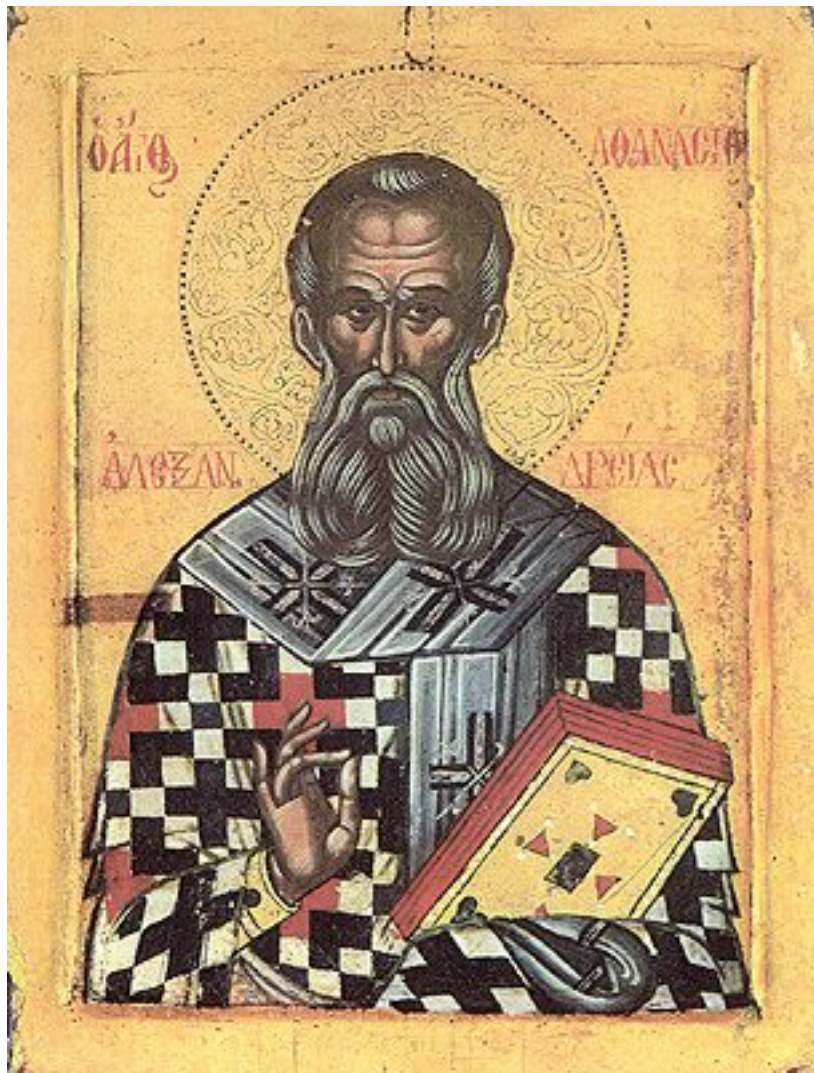
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Irenaeus as bishop (centre), detail of a stained-glass window, 13th century. In the cathedral of Saint-Jean, Lyon, France.

J. Baur and A. Lennoz



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## I Clement (95-96 CE)

The letter from the Christians in Rome to their fellow believers in Corinth known as *I Clement* is one of the earliest extant Christian documents outside the New Testament. There is widespread agreement in dating this letter 95-96 CE, in the year of the emperor Domitian or the first of his successor, Nerva. The letter reveals something of both the circumstances and attitudes of the Roman Christians, and how they differ from those of their fellow Christians in Asia Minor to whom the Revelation of John was addressed. Whereas in the Revelation of John, Rome is presented as the great harlot whose attacks upon the Church must be resisted, in *I Clement* one finds a much more positive view of the Roman government, and the elements of peace, harmony, and order that are so important to the author of this letter reflect some of the fundamental values of Roman society.

While the letter, which was sent on behalf of the whole church, does not name its writer, well-attested ancient tradition identifies it as the work of Clement, although precisely who he is is not clear. Tradition identifies him as the 3rd bishop of Rome after Peter, but this is unlikely because the office of monarchical bishop, in the sense intended by this later tradition, does not appear to have existed in Rome at this time.

Despite the popularity of this document in antiquity, relatively few manuscripts have survived. It was not until 1873 that a complete copy of the text was discovered by Bryennios in codex Hierosolymitanus that also includes II Clement, [Epistle of Barnabas](#), and the [Didache](#). The sources for the English translation in [\[LHH\]](#) 28-64 are:

- codex Alexandrinus (5th century, lacks 57.7-63.4)
- [codex Hierosolymitanus](#) (1056 CE)
- Latin translation (in a single 11th century MS)
- Syriac translation (in a New Testament MS, 1169-70 CE)

- Coptic translation (in 2 MSS, 4th and 7th century)
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## Epistle to the Laodiceans (close of the 3rd century CE)

At the close of the Epistle to the Colossians this request is made of its recipients:

**When this epistle has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read the epistle from Laodicea. (Col. 4:16)**

This tantalizing reference, though somewhat ambiguous as to who wrote whom (see [Lightfoot](#) for a discussion), offers a tempting invitation to some unknown author to provide the text of an Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, who were the neighbors of the congregation at Colossae.

The epistle discussed below is probably not the one mentioned in the [Muratorian Canon](#), see pp. 42-44 v. 2 of [Schneemelcher](#) for discussion of this unsettled matter. Composed perhaps at the close of the 3rd century, by the 4th century Jerome reports that 'some read the Epistle to the Laodiceans, but it is rejected by everyone' (*De viris ill.* 5). Of all the spurious pieces produced in the early Church, this is one of the most feeble. It is mystifying how it could have commanded so much respect in the Western Church for period of 1000 years. Comprising only 20 verses, the epistle is a pedestrian patchwork of phrases and sentences plagiarized from the genuine Pauline Epistles, particularly Philippians. After the author has expressed his joy at the faith and virtue of the Laodiceans, he warns them against heretics, and exhorts them to remain faithful to Christian doctrines and the Christian pattern of life. The epistle purports to have been written from prison.

There is no evidence of a Greek text. The epistle appears in more than 100

manuscripts of the Latin [Vulgate](#) (including the oldest, the celebrated codex Fuldensis, 546 CE), as well as in manuscripts of early Albigensian, Bohemian, English, and Flemish versions. At the close of the 10th century Aelfric, a monk in Dorset, wrote a treatise in Anglo-Saxon on the Old and New Testaments, in which he states that the apostle Paul wrote 15 Epistles. In his enumeration of them he place Laodiceans after Philemon. About 1165 CE John of Salisbury, writing about the canon to Henry count of Champagne (*Epist.* 209), acknowledges that 'it is the common, indeed almost universal, opinion that there are only 14 Epistles of Paul ... But the 15th is that which is written to the church of the Laodiceans'.

The Epistle to the Laodiceans is included in all 18 German Bibles printed prior to Luther's translation, beginning with the first German Bible, issued by Johann Mental at Strassburg in 1488. In these the Pauline Epistles, with the Epistle to the Hebrews, immediately follow the Gospels, with Laodiceans standing between Galatians and Ephesians. In the first Czech (Bohemian) Bible, published at Prague in 1488 and reprinted several times in the 16th and 17th centuries, Laodiceans follows Colossians and precedes I Thessalonians. Thus, as Bishop Lightfoot phrased it:

... for more than nine centuries this forged epistle hovered about the doors of the sacred Canon, without either finding admission or being peremptorily excluded. ([Lightfoot](#) p. 297)

It was not until the Council of Florence (1439-43) that the See of Rome delivered for the first time a categorical opinion on the Scriptural canon. In the list of 27 books of the New Testament there are 14 Pauline Epistles, that to the Hebrews being last, with the book of Acts coming immediately before the Revelation of John. The Epistle to the Laodiceans is not even mentioned.

## Epistle to the Laodiceans

1. Paul, an apostle not of men and not through man, but through Jesus Christ, to the brethren who are in Laodicea: 2. Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. I thank Christ in all my prayer that you are steadfast in him and persevering in his works, in expectation of the promise for the day of judgment. 4. And may you not be deceived by the vain talk of some people who tell (you) tales that they may lead you away from the truth of the

gospel which is proclaimed by me. 5. And now may God grant that those who come from me for the furtherance of the truth of the gospel (...) may be able to serve and to do good works for the well-being of eternal life. 6. And now my bonds are manifest, which I suffer in Christ, on account of which I am glad and rejoice. 7. This ministers to me unto eternal salvation, which (itself) is effected through your prayers and by the help of the Holy Spirit, whether it be through life or through death. 8. For my life is in Christ and to die is joy (to me). 9. An this will his mercy work in you, that you may have the same love and be of one mind. 10. Therefore, beloved, as you have heard my presence, so hold fast and do in the fear of God, and eternal life will be your portion. 11. For it is God who works in you. 12. And do without hesitation what you do. 13. And for the rest, beloved, rejoice in Christ and beware of those who are out for sordid gain. 14. May all your requests be manifest before God, and be yea steadfast in the mind of Christ. 15. And what is pure, true, proper, just and lovely, do. 16. And what you have heard and received, hold in your heart and peace will be with you. [17. Salute all the brethren with the holy kiss.] 18. The Saints salute you. 19. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. 20. And see that this epistle is read to the Colossians and that of the Colossians among you. (translation from pp. 43-44 v 2. of [\[Schneemelcher\]](#))

And from the [Vulgate](#):

## Epistula ad Laodicaeos

1:1 Paulus apostolus non ab hominibus neque per hominem sed per Iesum Christum, fratribus qui sunt Laodiciae. 1:2 gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre et Domino Iesu Christo. 1:3 gratias ago Christo per omnem orationem meam, quod permanentes estis in eo et perseverantes in operibus eius, promissum expectantes in diem iudicii. 1:4 neque destituant vos quorundam vaniloquia insinuantium, ut vos evertant a veritate evangelii quod a me praedicatur. 1:5 et nunc faciet Deus, ut qui sunt ex me ad profectum veritatis evangelii deservientes et facientes benignitatem operum quae salutis vitae aeternae 1:6 et nunc palam sunt vincula mea quae patior in Christo; quibus laetor et gaudeo. 1:7 et hoc mihi est ad

salutem perpetuam; quod ipsum factum orationibus vestris et administrantem Spiritum Sanctum, sive per vitam sive per mortem. 1:8 est enim mihi vere vita in Christo et mori gaudium. 1:9 et in ipsum in vobis faciet misericordiam suam, ut eandem dilectionem habeatis et sitis unianimes. 1:10 ergo, dilectissimi, ut audistis praesentia mei, ita retinete et facite in timore Dei, et erit vobis vita in aeternum; 1:11 est enim Deus qui operatur in vos. 1:12 et facite sine retractu quaecumque facitis. 1:13 et quod est, dilectissimi, gaudete in Christo. et praecavete sordidos in lucro. 1:14 omnes sint petitiones vestrae palam apud Deum. et estote firmi in sensu Christi. 1:15 et quae integra et vera et pudica et iusta et amabilia facite. 1:16 et quae audistis et accepistis, in corde retinete, et erit vobis pax. 1:17 salutate omnes fratres in osculo sancto. 1:18 salutant vos sancti. 1:19 gratia Domini Iesu cum spiritu vestro. 1:20 et facite legi Colosensium vobis. (from [The World](#))

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## **Gospel of the Twelve** (east of Jordan, 100-150 CE)

Nothing from the *Gospel of the Twelve (Apostles)* survives to us. The book is mentioned by [Origen](#), Ambrose, [Jerome](#), Philip of Side, Venerable Bede, and Theophylactus.

The majority of critics today are inclined to identify it with the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, of which fragments quoted by Epiphanius survive. This Gospel is of the synoptic type and was probably written in the 1st half of the 2nd century in the region east of Jordan. For discussion see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 1 pp. 166 and 374.

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## Gospel of Basilides (Alexandria, 117-138 CE)

Nothing from the *Gospel of Basilides* survives to us. The book is mentioned by [Origen](#), Jerome, Ambrose, Philip of Side, and Venerable Bede.

Basilides was a scholarly Gnostic who taught in Alexandria during the reign of Emperor Hadrian 117-138 CE. In the 130s he wrote the *Exegetica*, a considerable work comprising 24 books of which only a few fragments have been preserved in quotes from [Clement](#), [Origen](#), and [Irenaeus](#). From these fragments some scholars have put forth conjectures on what this Gospel may be like, but all of them must remain uncertain. For discussion see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 1 pp. 398.

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## Gospel of the Egyptians (Egypt, 100-150 CE)

All that survives to us from the 'Gospel of the Egyptians' are several quotations made by [Clement](#), Hippolytus, and Epiphanius. It was probably written in the first half of the first century (in Greek) and in Egypt, and its purpose was to promote doctrines held by the Encratites (such as rejection of marriage). Some of the sayings clearly demand sexual asceticism and the elimination of the sexual differences between male and female, a doctrine that is presented in other Gnostic writings from Egypt, e.g. Logia 37 and 114 of the [Gospel of Thomas](#).

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## Traditions of Matthias (Alexandria, 100-150 CE)

The *Traditions of Matthias* survives today only in fragments as quotations from [Clement](#). These quotations, except for the second, have no marked gnostic character.

The *Traditions of Matthias* was probably written in the 1st half of the 2nd century in Alexandria, or at any rate in Egypt. It may be the same as the [Gospel of Matthias](#). For discussion of this controversy see [\[Schneemelcher\]](#) v. 1 p. 385.

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