

# **Cannon, Creeds, & Revivals**

**How the Church Preserved our Christian Beliefs**

**Class 3 - Canon from Church Father Quotes**

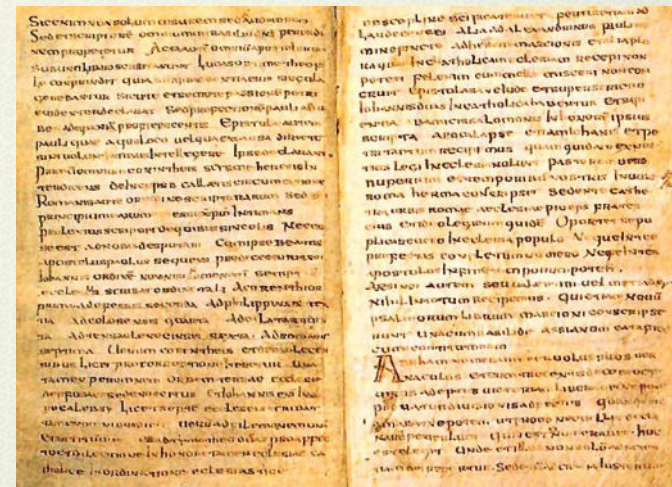
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# Review - Progress of the NT Canon

| Marcion (140-155) | Valentinus (140-150AD) | Muratorian (180AD) |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Luke/Acts         | Matthew                | Matthew, Mark      |
|                   | Luke/Acts              | Luke/Acts          |
|                   | John                   | John               |
| Romans            | Romans                 | Romans             |
| I & II Corin.     | I & II Corin.          | I & II Corin.      |
| Galatians         | Galatians              | Galatians          |
| Ephesians         | Ephesians              | Ephesians          |
| Philippians       | Philippians            | Philippians        |
| Colossians        | Colossians             | Colossians         |
| I & II Thess.     | I & II Thess.          | I & II Thess.      |
| Philemon          | Philemon               | Philemon           |
|                   |                        | I & II Tim., Titus |
|                   | I John                 | I & II John        |
|                   | Hebrews                |                    |
|                   |                        | Jude               |
|                   | Revelations            | Revelations        |
|                   |                        | Wisdom of Solomon  |

- Muratorian (180AD) - 22 of 27 books of NT established containing the most important core.
- Includes four Gospel, all major letters of Paul. Missing - Hebrews, I Peter, II Peter, James, III John



Picture of Muratorian Fragment in Ambrosian Library, Milan

# How do we determine if Christianity is true?

- **Science** - Science needs observable repetition (Scientific Method) and is limited to physical universe. Therefore, science can neither prove or disprove the existence of God --- only give indicators...
- **Historian** - History, by definition, only happens once (cannot use scientific repetition). Other tools are used:
  - **Dating** - How close in time is the documents/eyewitnesses to actual occurrence?
  - **Evidence** - How collaborated with landmarks, culture, language, etc. (archaeology)?
  - **Quantity** - How many independent records are there?

# Determining the Canon through Church Fathers

- We can construct NT through quotations of Early Church Fathers
- They were teaching, commentating and refuting heresy
- Some commented directly about accepted/rejected documents

## Early Church Fathers

- Irenaeus (AD 180)
- Hippolytus (AD 170 - 235)
- Tertullian (AD 196 - 212)
- Origen (AD 185 - 254)
- Eusebius (Bishop of Caesarea AD 314 - 339)

# Irenaeus (AD 180)

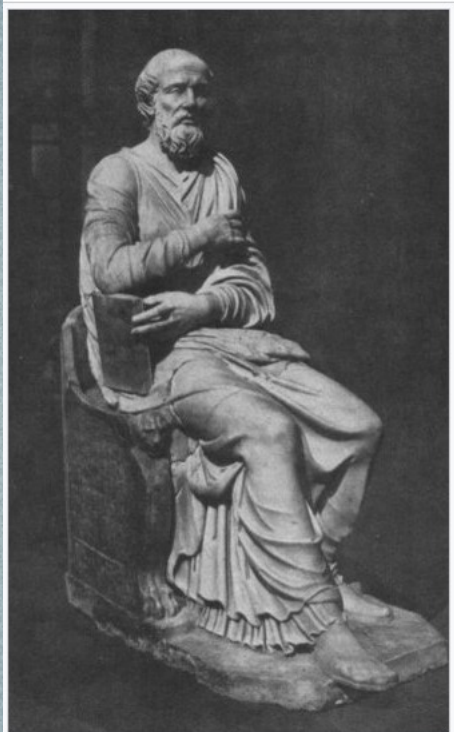


Irenaeus, in Church of St Irenaeus, Lyon.

- Irenaeus was born in the province of Asia ~ 130AD. After the persecution of 177, he became bishop of Lyon in place of the previous bishop who was martyred. Of Irenaeus' literary works, 2 have survived.
- His major work was “Against Heresies” ~ 180 AD (5 books). The original Greek has been lost for the most part: the work has been preserved in a Latin translation of the fourth century with the fourth and fifth books also preserved in an Armenian translation.
- Since Scripture played a dominant part in his arguments, we can derive his access to the NT books through his quotations. They are the four Gospels, Revelation, I Peter, Acts, the Pauline letters including Pastorals (did not quote Philemon), Hebrews, I & II John, James (without citation)

| Muratorian (180AD) | Irenaeus (180AD)   |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark      |
| Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts          |
| John               | John               |
| Romans             | Romans             |
| I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.      |
| Galatians          | Galatians          |
| Ephesians          | Ephesians          |
| Philippians        | Philippians        |
| Colossians         | Colossians         |
| I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.      |
| Philemon           | (no occasion)      |
| I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus |
| I & II John        | I & II John        |
|                    | Hebrews            |
| Jude               | Jude               |
|                    | James              |
|                    | I Peter            |
| Revelations        | Revelations        |
| Wisdom of Solomon  |                    |

# Hippolytus (AD 170 - 235)

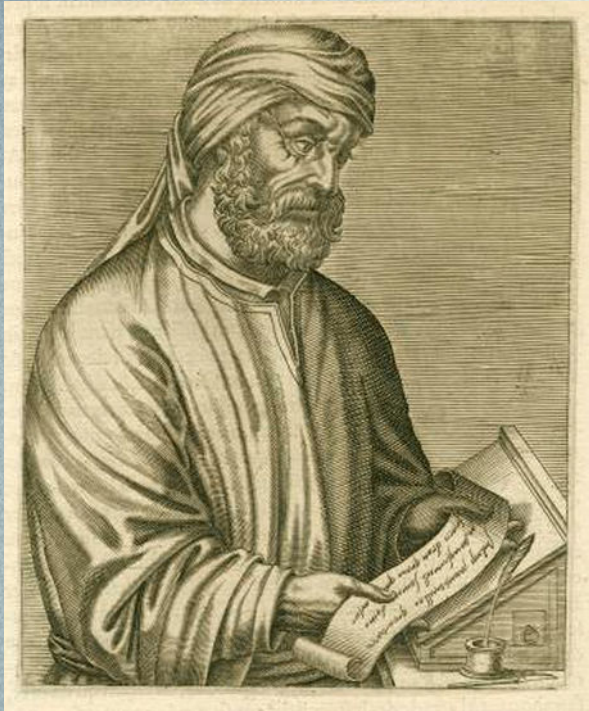


Roman sculpture, maybe of Hippolytus, found in 1551 and used for the attribution of the Apostolic Tradition

- Hippolytus of Rome, the last significant figure in the Roman church to write in Greek, was the greatest scholar of his age in the west.
- His works include a “Refutation of all heresies” in 10 books, a manual of the church order (“Apostolic tradition), a commentary on Daniel and other exegetical works and “On the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse” survived only in fragments.
- He refers to “all scripture” as comprising “the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles”. He knows Hebrews and quotes it, but not as scripture; he also appears to know (if only slightly) James, 2 Peter and Jude.

| Muratorian (180AD) | Irenaeus (180AD)   | Hippolytus (170-235 AD) |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark           |
| Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts               |
| John               | John               | John                    |
| Romans             | Romans             | Romans                  |
| I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.           |
| Galatians          | Galatians          | Galatians               |
| Ephesians          | Ephesians          | Ephesians               |
| Philippians        | Philippians        | Philippians             |
| Colossians         | Colossians         | Colossians              |
| I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.           |
| Philemon           | (no occasion)      | Philemon                |
| I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus      |
| I & II John        | I & II John        | I & II John             |
|                    | Hebrews            | Hebrews (not scripture) |
| Jude               | Jude               | Jude                    |
|                    | James              | James                   |
|                    | I Peter            | I & II Peter            |
| Revelations        | Revelations        | Revelations             |
| Wisdom of Solomon  |                    |                         |

# Tertullian (AD 196 - 212)



- **Background** - Tertullian of Carthage takes his place at the head of a distinguished series of Christian theologians who wrote in Latin. It is in his writings that we first find the designation “New Testament”.
- **NT Books** - He recognized the four gospels, Acts, the thirteen epistles of Paul, I Peter, I John and Revelation. He also included Jude. He did not mention James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John. Although it did not come to him as part of the NT, he judged Hebrews as worthy to be ranked with apostolic writings and regarded it as the work of Barnabas.

| Muratorian (180AD) | Irenaeus (180AD)   | Hippolytus (170-235) | Tertullian (196-212) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark        | Matthew, Mark        |
| Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts            | Luke/Acts            |
| John               | John               | John                 | John                 |
| Romans             | Romans             | Romans               | Romans               |
| I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.        | I & II Corin.        |
| Galatians          | Galatians          | Galatians            | Galatians            |
| Ephesians          | Ephesians          | Ephesians            | Ephesians            |
| Philippians        | Philippians        | Philippians          | Philippians          |
| Colossians         | Colossians         | Colossians           | Colossians           |
| I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.        | I & II Thess.        |
| Philemon           | (no occasion)      | Philemon             | Philemon             |
| I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus   | I & II Tim., Titus   |
| I & II John        | I & II John        | I & II John          | I John               |
|                    | Hebrews            | Hebrews (not Scrip)  | Hebrews (worthy)     |
| Jude               | Jude               | Jude                 | Jude                 |
|                    | James              | James                |                      |
|                    | I Peter            | I & II Peter         | I Peter              |
| Revelations        | Revelations        | Revelations          | Revelations          |
| Wisdom of Solomon  |                    |                      |                      |

# Origen (AD 185 - 254)

- **Background** - Origen was an early Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian who was born and spent the first half of his career in Alexandria. He was a prolific writer who wrote roughly 2,000 treatises in multiple branches of theology, including textual criticism, biblical exegesis and biblical hermeneutics, homiletics, and spirituality. He was one of the most influential figures in early Christian theology, apologetics, and asceticism.
- **NT Books** - Origen distinguished the undisputed book of the NT from those that were disputed. The undisputed books were the four gospels and Acts, the thirteen Pauline epistles, I Peter, I John and the Apocalypse.
- **Hebrews** - As a matter of form he followed the Alexandrian tradition in regarding Hebrews as Pauline; but he recognized that the writer had a better Greek style than Paul. The thoughts of the epistle he found admirable, not inferior to those of Paul's acknowledged letter; perhaps the thoughts were Paul's, while the language was due to one of the disciples --- but who really wrote the epistle God only knows. Since however, Origen knew that some churches did not accept Hebrews, he classed it as disputed.



Dutch illustration by Jan Luyken (1700), showing Origen teaching his students



# Origen (AD 185 - 254)

- **2 Peter, 2 & 3 John** - Origen is the earliest Christian writer to mention 2 Peter, it does not appear to have been known much before his day. The uncertainty which he mentions with regard to 2 and 3 John was probably due to their brevity, which led to their being easily overlooked. (Their internal evidence makes it clear that they come from the same circle, if not from the same individual author, as the Fourth Gospel and I John).
- **James** - There are several quotations from 'the reputed epistle of James.' in Origen works. The author of the epistle is called 'the apostle' and 'the Lord's brother'. As for Jude, Origen says in his commentary on Matthew that it was the work of the Lord's brother of that name (mentioned in Mt. 13:55): it has few lines, but is filled with the words of heavenly grace.
- **Disputed**- Origen mentioned all 27 books of the NT; 21, he says are acknowledged and six are doubtful. Other disputed books that did not make it into the canon were **Didache ("de-da-kay", very early church handbook), Letter of Barnabas, and Shepherd of Hermas**. After moving to Caesarea where they were not accepted, he manifested greater reserve concerning these books. He had doubts about the Preaching of Peter and the **Acts of Paul**.
- **Denounced**- Origen classified book as "false" because they taught false doctrine. These included Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Gospel of the Twelve, The Gospel according to Basilides.

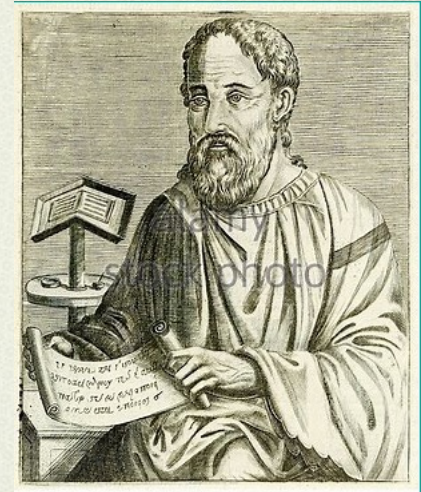
# Progress of the NT Canon

| Muratorian (180AD) | Irenaeus (180AD)   | Hippolytus (170-235 AD) | Tertullian (196-212 AD) | Origen (185-254 AD)    |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark           | Matthew, Mark           | Matthew, Mark          |
| Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts               | Luke/Acts               | Luke/Acts              |
| John               | John               | John                    | John                    | John                   |
| Romans             | Romans             | Romans                  | Romans                  | Romans                 |
| I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.           | I & II Corin.           | I & II Corin.          |
| Galatians          | Galatians          | Galatians               | Galatians               | Galatians              |
| Ephesians          | Ephesians          | Ephesians               | Ephesians               | Ephesians              |
| Philippians        | Philippians        | Philippians             | Philippians             | Philippians            |
| Colossians         | Colossians         | Colossians              | Colossians              | Colossians             |
| I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.           | I & II Thess.           | I & II Thess.          |
| Philemon           | (no occasion)      | Philemon                | Philemon                | Philemon               |
| I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus      | I & II Tim., Titus      | I & II Tim., Titus     |
| I & II John        | I & II John        | I & II John             | I John                  | I John, II & III John* |
|                    | Hebrews            | Hebrews (not scr)       | Hebrews (worthy)        | Hebrews *              |
| Jude               | Jude               | Jude                    | Jude                    | Jude*                  |
|                    | James              | James                   |                         | James*                 |
|                    | I Peter            | I & II Peter            | I Peter                 | I Peter, II Peter*     |
| Revelations        | Revelations        | Revelations             | Revelations             | Revelations            |
| Wisdom of Solomon  |                    |                         |                         | *Disputed              |



# Eusebius (Bishop of Caesarea AD 314 - 339)

- **Background** - Second Christian historian after Luke. Ecclesiastical traces Christian movement from Christ to Constantine in 313 AD. He preserved original sources such as Papias writings.
- **NT books** - “In the first place should be placed the holy tetrad of the gospels. These are followed by the writings of the Acts of the Apostles. After this should be reckoned the epistles of Paul. Next after them should be recognized the so-called first epistle of John and likewise Peter. In addition to these must be placed, should it seem right, John's Apocalypse.” (Hebrews is included in the epistles of Paul.)



Eusebius 260-339 from "true portraits..." by andré thévet published in 1594

# Eusebius (Bishop of Caesarea AD 314 - 339)

- **Disputed** - “To the books which are disputed, but recognized by the majority, belong the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, the second epistle of Peter and the so-called second and third epistles of John, whether these are by the evangelist or by some else with the same name.”
- **Spurious** - Among the books which are spurious should be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the so-called **Shepherd**, the Apocalypse of Peter and in addition to these the so-called **Epistle of Barnabas** and the so-called Teachings of the Apostle, and moreover, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, should it seem right. For, as I said, some reject it, while others count it among the acknowledged books. Some have also included in the list the **Gospel according to the Hebrews**, in which special pleasure is taken by those of the Hebrews who have accepted Christ

# Eusebius (Bishop of Caesarea AD 314 - 339)

- **Denouced** - Gospel of Peter (portrayed Christ's human nature was only apparent and not real). **Gospel of Thomas (gnostic work)**, Gospel of Matthias. Acts of Paul, Peter, Andrew, John and Thomas - last two are definitely gnostic works; the first two belong to early Christian fiction.
- In 330AD, Constantine requested Eusebius to prepare 50 bibles for the new capital of Constantinople. The copies contained all the books which Eusebius list as universally acknowledged (including Hebrews and Revelation) and the five catholic epistles. In short, the same 27 books as appear in our copies of the New Testament today.

# Progress of the NT Canon

| Marcion (140-155AD) | Valentinus (140-150AD) | Muratorian (180AD) | Irenaeus (180AD)   | Hippolytus (170-235 AD) | Tertullian (196-212 AD) | Origen (185-254 AD)    | Eusebius (314 - 339)  |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Luke/Acts           | Matthew                | Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark      | Matthew, Mark           | Matthew, Mark           | Matthew, Mark          | Matthew, Mark         |
|                     | Luke/Acts              | Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts          | Luke/Acts               | Luke/Acts               | Luke/Acts              | Luke/Acts             |
|                     | John                   | John               | John               | John                    | John                    | John                   | John                  |
| Romans              | Romans                 | Romans             | Romans             | Romans                  | Romans                  | Romans                 | Romans                |
| I & II Corin.       | I & II Corin.          | I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.      | I & II Corin.           | I & II Corin.           | I & II Corin.          | I & II Corin.         |
| Galatians           | Galatians              | Galatians          | Galatians          | Galatians               | Galatians               | Galatians              | Galatians             |
| Ephesians           | Ephesians              | Ephesians          | Ephesians          | Ephesians               | Ephesians               | Ephesians              | Ephesians             |
| Philippians         | Philippians            | Philippians        | Philippians        | Philippians             | Philippians             | Philippians            | Philippians           |
| Colossians          | Colossians             | Colossians         | Colossians         | Colossians              | Colossians              | Colossians             | Colossians            |
| I & II Thess.       | I & II Thess.          | I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.      | I & II Thess.           | I & II Thess.           | I & II Thess.          | I & II Thess.         |
| Philemon            | Philemon               | Philemon           | (no occasion)      | Philemon                | Philemon                | Philemon               | Philemon              |
|                     |                        | I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus | I & II Tim., Titus      | I & II Tim., Titus      | I & II Tim., Titus     | I & II Tim., Titus    |
|                     | I John                 | I & II John        | I & II John        | I & II John             | I John                  | I John, *II & III John | I John, II & III John |
|                     | Hebrews                |                    | Hebrews            | *Hebrews                | *Hebrews                | *Hebrews               | Hebrews               |
|                     |                        | Jude               | Jude               | Jude                    | Jude                    | *Jude                  | Jude                  |
|                     |                        |                    | James              | James                   |                         | *James                 | James                 |
|                     |                        |                    | I Peter            | I & II Peter            | I Peter                 | I Peter, *II Peter     | I Peter, II Peter     |
|                     | Revelations            | Revelations        | Revelations        | Revelations             | Revelations             | Revelations            | Revelations           |
|                     |                        | Wisdom of Solomon  |                    | *Not Scripture          | *Worthy                 | *Disputed              |                       |

# Summary

- The progress of the Canon
  - By 180 AD, the Muratorian Fragment established 22 of 27 books/letters of the NT. In it contains the complete message of the gospel message and teachings
  - The remaining 5 (Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, III John) do not take away from the central message of the Gospel but serve to enhance.
  - By the time of Eusebius (314-339), they were fully accepted into the Canon
- The Early Church Father cherished and quoted extensively the New Testament to the extent that we can construct entire NT just through their quotations!

Next Week - We will read from “on the bubble” documents