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How to Read and Study the Bible
Lesson Five – Part 3: How We Got the New Testament
Development of the NT Canon: Periods 30-200

Lesson Five – Part 3 Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Key Terms
- Important Emphasis
- Development of the NT Canon: The Early Period, AD 30-99
- Development of the NT Canon: The Apostolic Fathers, AD 100-200
- Check Your Progress Questions

Reflection Questions

A. Which letter/epistle of the apostle Paul would you choose to teach new believers about salvation in Jesus Christ? Briefly explain **why**?

B. Who are some of the fathers and mothers of the Civil Rights Movement? Briefly explain **why**?

Key Terms

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| Apostles | Ignatius of Antioch |
| Apostolic Age | Jean Cotelier |
| Apostolic Fathers | Jesus of Nazareth |
| Authoritative Teaching | Other Gospels |
| Barnabas | Papias |
| Canonical Gospels | Paul |
| Christian Classic Ethreal Library (CCEL) | Peter |
| Christian Literature | Polycarp of Smyrna |
| Clement of Alexandria | Scriptures |

Important Emphasis

Toolbox- We are covering the material in this section in order that you may have creditable resources at your finger tips. These resources will be proven to be very effective. Especially in our pursuit for a biblical understanding. We can use it to examine our Songs, Worship, living, ministry, and our replies. 2 Tim 2:15 and 2 Tim. 4:2-5

Thinking more Critically- There are times that we need more extensive answers for the questions that arise in life. These questions lead us to examine ourselves internally and how we are living life experientially in God. 1 Peter 3:15

Tougher Skin- There are several people who are tremendously emotional about their faith. This does not imply that we are not supposed to feel our faith but we must become more intentional about the true meaning and the ways in which we express our faith reflectively. 2 Tim 2:3-6 and James 1:2-4

Wealth of History- The New Testament that we read today is the end result of many centuries of effort. Manuscripts originally written on papyrus were copied and preserved from generation to generation.

Wholistic understanding of Scriptural History- Most Jews in Jesus day agreed on a Authoritative texts, including the Pentateuch, the former prophets (Joshua , Jude, Samuel, and Kings) the Latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, And the minor prophets), and writings such as the psalms.

Words Concerning the History- Already in the second century we see a pattern of Both revering New Testament Scripture and collecting it into an authoritative Body of texts. Clement of Rome asks his readers to especially remember the words of the Lord Jesus which he spoke when he was teaching gentleness and longsuffering

Justin the Martyr- speaks of the Gospels as the memoirs of the Apostles useful To establish doctrine.

Irenaeus- the church has the Gospel in four-fold form, held together by one spirit.”

Overview

The New Bible Dictionary breaks the development of the New Testament canon into specific periods of time:

The Earliest Period, AD 30-99

The Apostolic Fathers, AD 100-200

The Influence of Marcion, c.a. AD 140

Irenaeus and Eusebius

Fixation of the New Testament Canon, c.a. AD 367

The Earliest Period, AD 30-99

This is the period that includes the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, the beginning of the Christian church, the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas, and the writing of the various epistles and letters that comprise the New Testament.

During this period, there was no recognized distinctly _____ . However, the letters/epistles of the apostle Paul were circulated among various churches in Asia Minor (see **Colossians 3:16**, and **1 Thessalonians 5:27**). The apostle Peter also attested to the availability and use of the apostle Paul's letters in Christian church worship services (**2 Peter 3:15-16**).

During this period, we also see the development of the four _____ Gospels. Additionally, there were _____ Gospels in circulation among the churches. These were not accepted into the New Testament canon as _____

_____ :
Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Philip, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of the Egyptians, and Gospel of Truth.

Recognized book the book must be true match. It must match the <i>regla fides</i> "Rules of faith" Eusebius referred to the three categories of text recognized, disputed, and spurious

Apostolic Fathers, AD 100-200

The period immediately following the close of the first century is referred to as the "Apostolic Age." The Apostolic Fathers got their title from the close proximity they had to the original apostles. Some of them had even been taught by the apostles prior to their deaths.

The Apostolic Fathers sought to continue faithfully the teaching of the apostles, applying it to new situations, thus providing a crucial witness to the early development of Christianity. *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*

Apostolic Father, any of the Greek Christian writers, several unknown, who were authors of early Christian works dating primarily from the late 1st and early 2nd centuries. Their works are the principal source for information about Christianity during the two or three generations following the Apostles. They were originally called apostolic men (*apostolici*), which was derived from their supposed contacts with the Apostles or the apostolic community.

[Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Apostolic-Father>]

The writings in this collection form the earliest portion of a larger collection of texts often called the “Church Fathers” that includes Christian writings up through Isidore of Seville 636 in the West and John Damascus ca 750 in the East. While the phrase apostolic fathers seem to have been used in antiquity and collections of early Christian writings existed during the middle Ages its modern significance may be traced to the 17th century.

God is at work in and through these chapters to bring life and transformation to all who seek him there.

Who were the Apostolic/Ante-Nicene Fathers?

Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Clement of Alexandria, and Papias.

[Source: *Canon of the New Testament*, ” *New Bible Dictionary*]

In 1672, a French scholar by the name of Jean Cotelier wrote a two-volume work on the writings of the second century Christians that he called “Apostolic Fathers.” Cotelier pointed out that many of the Apostolic Fathers made references to the writings of Paul and in some cases the Gospels, when they were known.

The Apostolic Fathers’ references to the first century Christian literature [the canonical Gospels and Paul’s writings] helps us to date the New Testament writings.

Many of the works/writings of the Apostolic Fathers are still available online at the Christian Classic Ethreal Library (CCEL) Web site.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. What topics were included in the Earliest Period of the New Testament development (30-99 AD)?

2. Which apostle's letters/epistles were circulated among the first century churches, and who verified this fact?

3. Aside from the four canonical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, what "other Gospels" were written?

4. Who were the Apostolic Fathers of the first and second centuries?
