

The Doctrine of Scripture (2)

The Canonicity, Transmission & Translation of the Bible

NT Canonicity

Key questions:

- *What was the test of canonicity? What was the principle that led to the selection of these books now in our NT?*
- *How and when did this recognition come about?*

NT Canonicity

Historic View of NT Canonicity

1. Only one criterion for canonicity
 - *authorship* – apostolic authority (apostolicity)
 - the apostles, including Paul, were appointed by Christ and recognized as His authoritative spokesmen

NT Canonicity

Historic View of NT Canonicity

2. Process of production not recognition
 - the writings of the apostles were immediately received as authoritative and normative for the church
 - the NT canon is limited to the apostolic age – no divinely authoritative writings after the apostles

NT Canonicity

Historic View of NT Canonicity

3. Historical recognition
 - church leaders and councils in the 4th century did not establish the canon; they simply vindicated what had been long since established
 - historical evidence shows that the NT canon was known and recognized before A.D. 150

NT Canonicity

Historical Survey

- searching for evidence of...
 1. when books/letters were received
 2. the reasons for this reception

NT Canonicity

Historical Survey

A. Apostolic Fathers Era (70-135 A.D.)

- Clement (bishop of Rome); *1 Clement* (95 A.D.)
- Ignatius (bishop of Antioch); *7 letters* (110 A.D.)
- Polycarp (bishop of Smyrna); *Philippians* (110 A.D.)
- Basilides (Gnostic heretic; 120 A.D.)
- *Epistle of Barnabas* (130 A.D. ?)

NT Canonicity

Historical Survey

B. Greek Apologists Era (135-170 A.D.)

- Papias (bishop of Hierapolis); 140 A.D.
- Justin "Martyr" (teacher in Rome); 140-160 A.D.
- Tatian (Syrian; with Justin); *Diatessaron* (150 A.D.)
- Marcion (heretic); "Pauline canon" (140 A.D.)
- *Muratorian Canon* – fragment from 170 A.D.