

The Perfect Book: Canonicity

How were the books of the Bible determined?

- I. Definition and distinction of the doctrine
 - A. Definition: The books of the Old Testament and New Testament are said to be canonical when they have been measured and have been recognized as being the inspired word of God.
 - B. Distinctions of doctrines
- II. Explanation of the doctrine
 - A. Meaning and usage of the Greek word for canon (κανών)
 - 1. Meaning of canon (κανών)
 - 2. First theological usage—the term was first applied to the New Testament Scriptures in 350 AD by Athanasius.
 - B. The time element in New Testament canonicity
 - 1. The process of forming a New Testament canon was gradual.
 - 2. By 200 AD only seven New Testament books were being debated, as to their inspiration.
 - 3. Formal recognition of the 27 New Testament books occurred in 393 AD at the Synod of Hippo.
 - C. The determining standards for New Testament canonicity
 - D. Reasons for formal recognition of the New Testament books
 - 1. To prevent confusion, heresy, and immaturity.
 - 2. The writing of other books.
 - 3. The existence and circulation of the inspired books
 - 4. Persecutions (for example, Diocletian)
 - E. Reasons for the exclusion of the Deuterocanonical books (also known as the Apocrypha)