

## God Wrote a Book: The Canonization of the Greek Scriptures

### Opening Discussion

1. Do you remember the DaVinci Code?
2. What do you remember about it?
3. How would you respond to this quote from the book?

“Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike.”  
The DaVinci Code, Dan Brown, 325

### Review:

- Bible were identified as Scripture through a process called Canonization.
- God’s people did not determine which books would become Scripture, they recognized the books that were already Scripture.

The 27 books of the Bible that we call the New Testament were recognized as authoritative, God-breathed Scripture from the earliest records of church history.

### 1. When were the individual books of the New Testament written down?

*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. Luke 1:1-4*

### Timeline of New Testament Writings

- Gospels: between the 50s AD and 98 AD
- Acts: completed before Paul’s death circa 64-67 AD.
- Epistles: between 40 AD and 98 AD
- Revelation: written before John’s death circa 98 AD.

### 2. When and how did the books of the New Testament come to be recognized as Scripture?

“There are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd.” Athanasius 367 AD

“I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church.” Constantine to Eusebius in 331 AD

“The Holy Bible: Texts of shady origin collected by competing bishops on order of politically motivated Roman Emperor Constantine to stabilize his empire and since then repeatedly adapted to suit the needs of contemporary rulers and clergy, but never made to comply with reality.” Positif Atheisme (Positive Atheism) on Twitter, March 2018

“Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike.”  
The DaVinci Code, Dan Brown, 325

“It also ought to be read; but it cannot be made public in the Church to the people, nor *placed* among the prophets, as their number is complete, nor among the apostles.”  
The Muratorian Fragment regarding the Shepherd of Hermas 170 AD

“The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come.” **1 Clement 42** writing circa 96 AD.

“I do not suppose ye are ignorant that the living Church is the body of Christ: for the scripture saith, *God made man, male and female*. The male is Christ and the female is the Church. And the Books and the Apostles plainly declare that the Church existeth not now for the first time, but hath been from the beginning.” **2 Clement 14** circa 100 AD

“I did not think myself competent for this, that being a convict I should order you as though I were an Apostle.” Ignatius, Letter to the Trallians before 108 AD

For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” **1st Timothy 5:18**

Count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. **2 Peter 3:15-16**