

The Formation and Basis of the New Testament Canon

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Week 2

3. Important but Underwhelming Agreement: The Church's Original Process of Deliberation and Subsequent Questioning in the Modern Period

a. Earliest Apostolic Fathers

i. Clement of Rome

ii. Polycarp of Smyrna

Letter to the Philippians 12.1—"For I am confident that you are well versed in the Scriptures...Only, as it is said in these Scriptures, 'Be ye angry and sin not,' and 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath.' Blessed is the man who remembers this, and I believe that it is so with you."

7.1-2—"For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an anti-Christ; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the Cross is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment—this man is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, leaving the foolishness of the crowd, and their false teaching, let us turn back to the word which was delivered to us in the beginning, 'watching unto prayer' and persevering in fasting, beseeching the all-seeing God in our supplications 'to lead us not into temptation,' even as the Lord said, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"

iii. *Epistle of Barnabas*

iv. *2 Clement*

b. Catalysts toward greater definition

i. Gnosticism

ii. Marcion

iii. Montanism

iv. Persecution

v. Use of the Codex

vi. Constantine

vii. Further Reflection

c. Steps toward greater definition

i. Irenaeus of Lyons

ii. Clement of Alexandria

iii. Tertullian

iv. Areas of consensus emerging

d. Significant consensus: Formal lists and church councils

i. Muratorian Canon

ii. Origen of Alexandria

iii. Eusebius of Caesarea

History of the Church, 3.25.1-7

- Homologoumena (agreed upon)
- Antilegoumena (debated)
- Spurious

iv. Athanasius of Alexandria's Easter letter in AD 367

v. Augustine

- *On Christian Learning* 2.13

- Synod of Hippo (393) and Third Council of Carthage (397)

- Sixth Council of Carthage (419)

vi. Jerome

vii. Council of Trent (1545-63)

viii. Belgic Confession (1561)

ix. Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

e. Summary reflections