

HOW WAS  
THE BIBLE  
CANONIZED

# CANONIZATION:



# KEY TERM: "CANON"

THE WORD "CANON" COMES FROM THE GREEK KANON, MEANING A ROD OR RULER USED FOR MEASURING, AND THE HEBREW KANEH, A MEASURING REED OR ROD.

BY THE FOURTH CENTURY, EARLY CHRISTIANS USED "CANON" TO DESCRIBE THE "RULE OF FAITH"—THE NORMATIVE STANDARD FOR TRUE CHRISTIAN TEACHING.

APPLIED TO SCRIPTURE, "CANON" REFERS TO THE COLLECTION OF WRITINGS RECOGNIZED AS DIVINELY INSPIRED AND AUTHORITATIVE.

THUS, A CANONICAL BOOK IS ONE THAT MEETS GOD'S STANDARD OF INSPIRED, AUTHORITATIVE REVELATION—NOT MERELY AN OLD OR RESPECTED TEXT.

*From  
Measuring  
Rod to Rule  
of Faith*



THE WORD "CANON" FUNCTIONS IN  
TWO COMPLEMENTARY WAYS THAT  
TOGETHER DESCRIBE HOW GOD'S  
AUTHORITATIVE WORD OPERATES IN  
THE WORLD.

*Recognized  
And Received*



PASSIVE SENSE  
ACTIVE SENSE.

# CANON IN TWO SENSES

# SYNONYMS FOR CANONICITY

ESCAPE



**SACRED  
SCRIPTURES**

– THE HOLY WRITINGS SET  
APART BY GOD.



**AUTHORITATIVE  
WRITINGS**

– TEXTS CARRYING  
DIVINE AUTHORITY.



**PROPHETIC  
BOOKS**

– WRITINGS BEARING  
GOD'S PROPHETIC  
VOICE.

**BOOKS THAT DEFILE  
THE HANDS**

– SACRED TEXTS TREATED  
WITH REVERENCE.

AGE DETERMINES  
CANONICITY

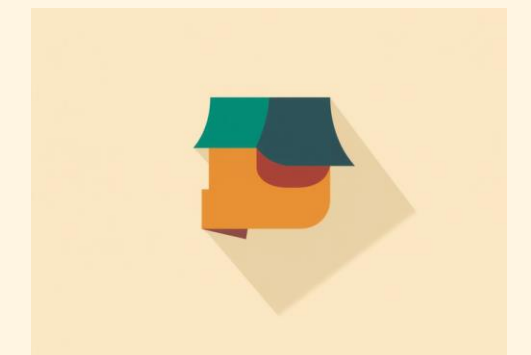
HEBREW LANGUAGE  
DETERMINES CANONICITY

AGREEMENT WITH TORAH  
DETERMINES CANONICITY

CHURCH  
AUTHORITY  
DETERMINES  
CANONICITY

*Common  
Misunderstandings*

INACCURATE  
VIEWS





AGE  
DETERMINES  
CANONICITY

# INACCURATE VIEW #1

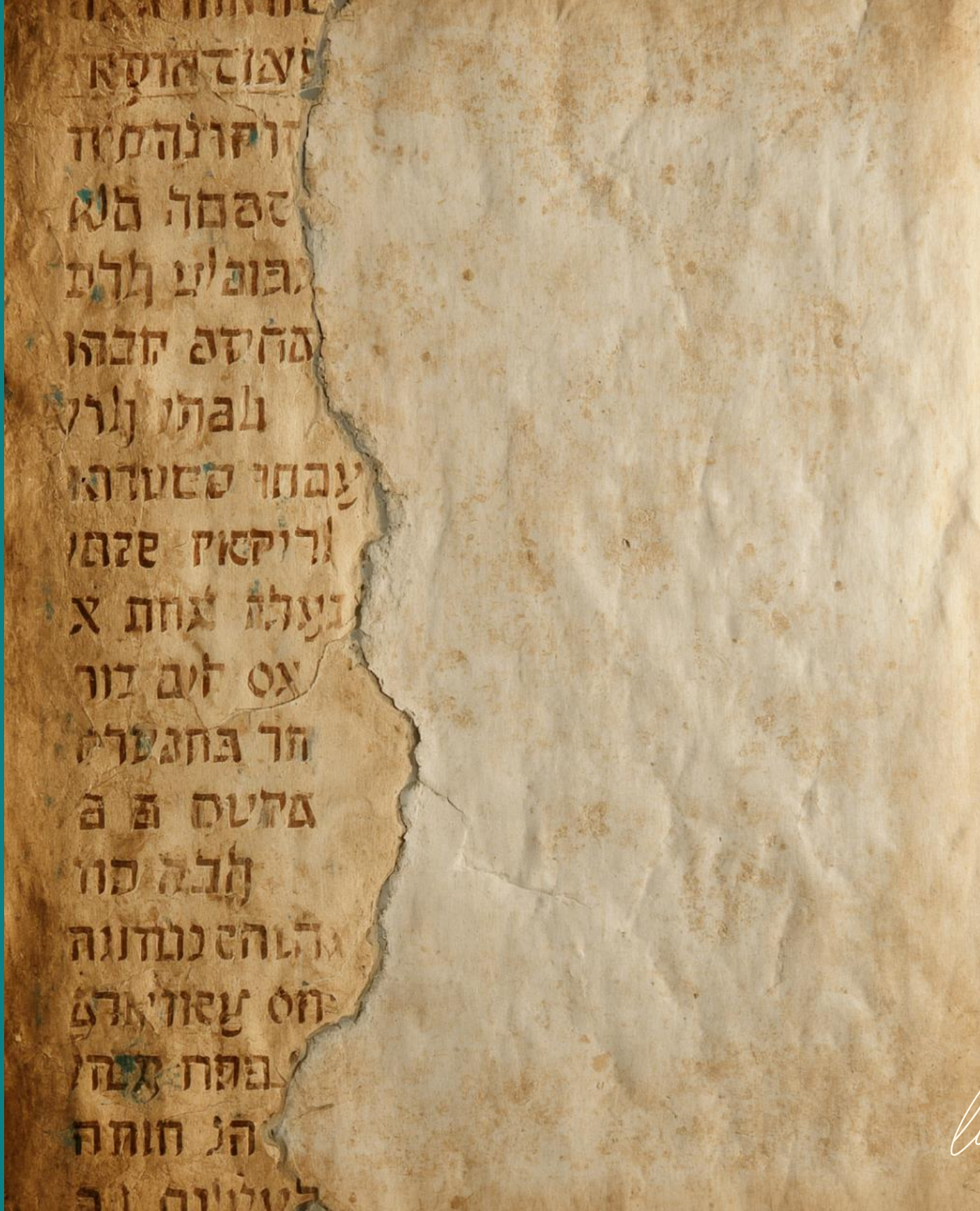
OLD BOOKS ARE NOT  
NECESSARILY CANONICAL.  
EXAMPLES INCLUDE THE BOOK OF  
THE WARS OF THE LORD AND THE  
BOOK OF JASHAR—ANCIENT  
TEXTS NEVER RECOGNIZED AS  
SCRIPTURE.

AUTHORITATIVE STATUS  
DEPENDS ON DIVINE  
INSPIRATION, NOT MERE  
ANTIQUITY. AGE ALONE WAS  
NEVER THE TEST FOR  
CANONICITY.

*Debunking a  
Common  
Misconception*

SOME BOOKS WERE ACCEPTED  
IMMEDIATELY UPON WRITING.  
MOSES' WORKS RECEIVED  
AUTHORITY AT ONCE, AND  
JEREMIAH WAS CITED AS  
SCRIPTURE BY DANIEL 9:2 WITHIN  
DECADES.

**AGE ALONE CANNOT  
DETERMINE CANONICITY.**



INACCURATE  
VIEW #2

# HEBREW LANGUAGE DETERMINES CANONICITY

*Inspiration  
knows no  
linguistic bounds*

SOME NON-CANONICAL WORKS  
WERE WRITTEN IN HEBREW,  
DEMONSTRATING THAT  
LANGUAGE ALONE CANNOT  
DETERMINE CANONICITY.

LANGUAGE IS NOT THE TEST  
OF CANONICITY.



AGREEMENT  
WITH TORAH

# INACCURATE VIEW #3

TORAH DID NOT FUNCTION AS  
THE TEST FOR ALL LATER BOOKS.  
THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO  
BOTH TORAH AND LATER  
WRITINGS.

*Unity  
through  
Inspiration*

AGREEMENT WITH TORAH  
DOES NOT DETERMINE  
CANONICITY.



INACCURATE  
VIEW #4

# CHURCH AUTHORITY

THE CHURCH DID NOT CREATE  
THE OT CANON—IT RECOGNIZED  
WHAT GOD HAD ALREADY  
INSPIRED. THE COMMUNITY OF  
FAITH DISCOVERED RATHER THAN  
INVENTED DIVINE AUTHORITY.

THE COMMUNITY RECOGNIZED  
WHAT GOD INSPIRED.

# DISCOVERING CANONICITY

**FIVE CORE TESTS GUIDED  
THE EARLY CHURCH IN  
RECOGNIZING WHICH  
BOOKS BELONGED IN THE  
NEW TESTAMENT CANON.**

**WRITTEN BY A PROPHET OF GOD?  
WRITER CREDENTIALLED BY GOD?  
TRUTHFUL ABOUT GOD, MAN, ETC.?  
LIFE-TRANSFORMING POWER?  
RECEIVED/ACCEPTED BY GOD'S PEOPLE?**

*Core Tests for  
Canonicity*



# PROPHETIC / APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY CLAIMS

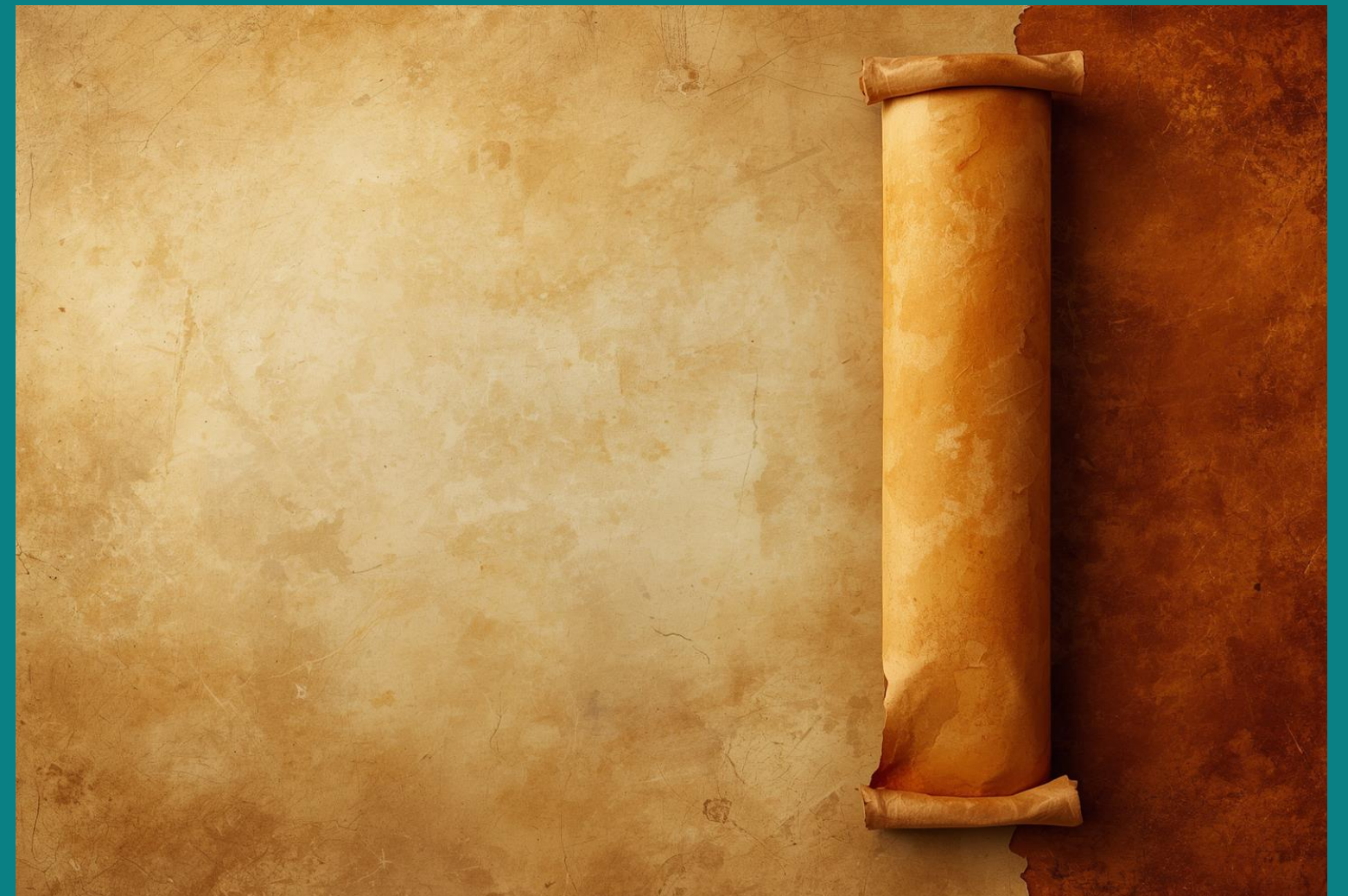
THE FIRST TEST FOR CANONICITY ASKS WHETHER A BOOK BEARS CLAIMS OF DIVINE AUTHORITY—BOTH EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT—THROUGH PROPHETIC OR APOSTOLIC VOICE.

*Test 1 of 5*

NT BOOKS CONTAIN EXPLICIT CLAIMS SUCH AS "THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME..." AND "THUS SAYS THE LORD," DEMONSTRATING DIRECT DIVINE ORIGIN.

IMPLICIT AUTHORITY APPEARS THROUGH APOSTOLIC TEACHING, COMMANDS, AND THE PHRASE "IT IS WRITTEN," APPLYING SCRIPTURE'S WEIGHT TO NEW WRITINGS.

THE PROPHETIC VOICE MATTERS BECAUSE GOD'S TRUE MESSENGERS SPEAK WITH HIS AUTHORITY, MAKING THEIR WRITINGS INHERENTLY TRUSTWORTHY AND CANONICAL.



# CREDENTIALLED BY GOD



NT BOOKS MUST BE APOSTOLIC OR WRITTEN  
UNDER APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY TO BE  
RECOGNIZED AS SCRIPTURE.

APOSTOLIC CONNECTION  
MATTERS BECAUSE IT  
TIES EACH BOOK  
DIRECTLY TO  
EYEWITNESSES OF  
CHRIST'S MINISTRY.



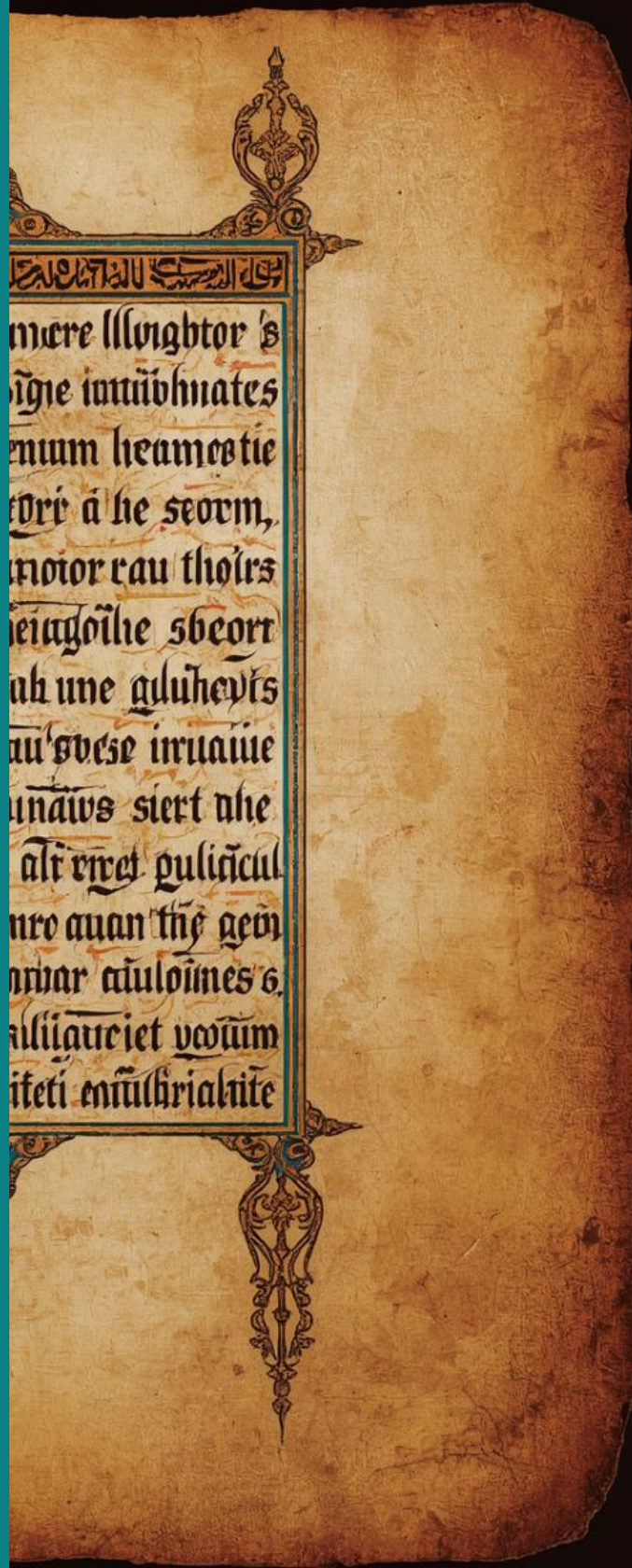
CANONIZATION

# TEST 3: TRUTHFULNESS

INSPIRED WRITINGS MUST NOT  
CONTRADICT GOD'S PRIOR  
REVELATION. DOCTRINAL OR  
HISTORICAL ERRORS UNDERMINE  
A BOOK'S CLAIM TO DIVINE  
INSPIRATION.

*United by  
the Spirit of  
Truth*

**THE STANDARD IS  
UNWAVERING: GOD'S WORD  
IS WHOLLY TRUE.**



# LIFE-TRANSFORMING POWER

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE, PIERCING TO THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, DISCERNING THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART. — HEBREWS 4:12

*Test 4: The  
Word at  
work*

SCRIPTURE EQUIPS BELIEVERS FOR EVERY GOOD WORK, PROVIDING TRAINING, REPROOF, CORRECTION, AND INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. — 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES, TRANSFORMING LIVES FROM THE INSIDE OUT. — ROMANS 1:16

THIS TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT SERVES AS EVIDENCE OF DIVINE INSPIRATION, DISTINGUISHING SCRIPTURE FROM MERE HUMAN WRITINGS.



ESCAPE

# TEST 5: RECEPTION BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD



THE PEOPLE OF GOD  
ULTIMATELY  
RECOGNIZED WHICH  
WRITINGS CARRIED  
DIVINE AUTHORITY.

COMMUNAL VALIDATION OVER TIME SERVED  
AS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN ESTABLISHING  
CANONICITY.



HOW THE OT  
CANON WAS  
RECOGNIZED

# CANONIZATION: OLD TESTAMENT



# CANONIZATION: OLD TESTAMENT

HOW THE OT CANON WAS RECOGNIZED — THE TRUE TEST  
OF CANONICITY IS DIVINE INSPIRATION, NOT HUMAN  
CRITERIA.

*Core Claim*



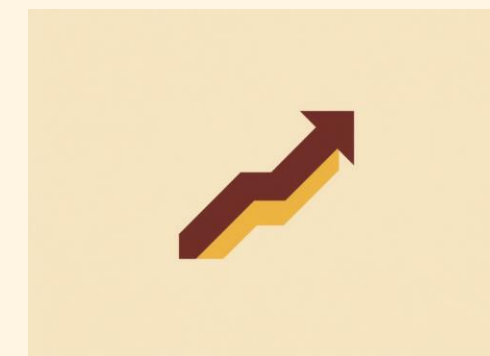


THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON  
DEVELOPED OVER CENTURIES  
AS LATER BOOKS  
RECOGNIZED AND CITED  
EARLIER AUTHORITATIVE  
WRITINGS.

*Later books  
cite earlier*

OT  
DEVELOPME  
NT

# PROGRESSIVE COLLECTION



# CANONIZATION COMPLETE

**THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON WAS COMPLETED WITH THE PROPHETIC WRITINGS BY APPROXIMATELY 400 BC, ESTABLISHING THE AUTHORITATIVE COLLECTION OF HEBREW SCRIPTURES RECOGNIZED BY GOD'S PEOPLE.**

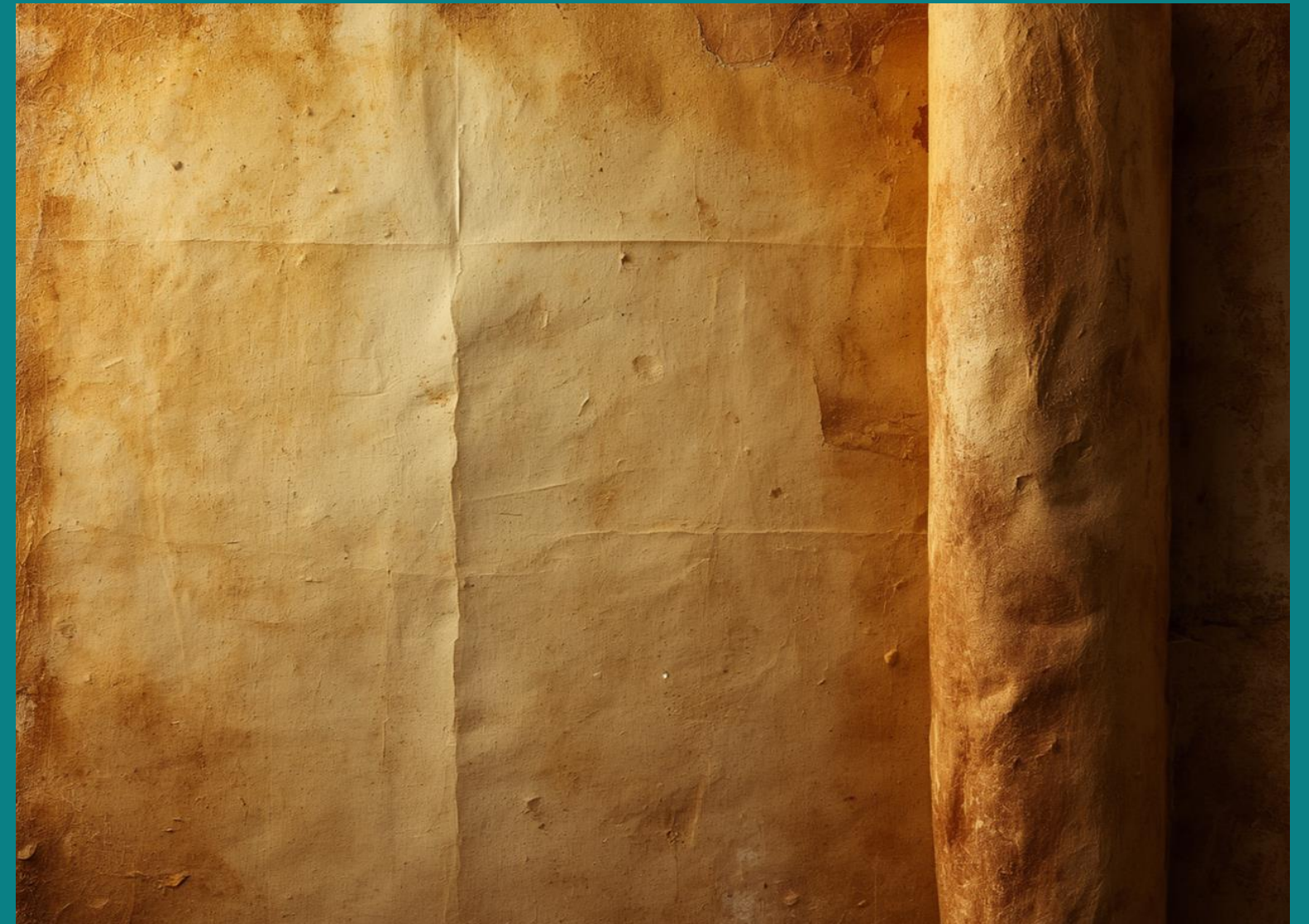
**FOUR CATEGORIES OF OT BOOKS EMERGED DURING THIS PROCESS:**

**HOMOLOGOUMENA (WIDELY ACCEPTED BOOKS),**

**PSEUDEPIGRAPHA (REJECTED FALSE WRITINGS),**

**ANTILEGOMENA (OCCASIONALLY QUESTIONED BOOKS LIKE SONG OF SOLOMON AND EZEKIEL),**

**APOCRYPHA (DISPUTED BY SOME COMMUNITIES).**





**CANONIZATION:  
NEW  
TESTAMENT**

**B**irth ein tim thiwah on uné tho rāsth usren i Comms and super-  
reguch anche lē's tthel codein hinn f's a hoy. laeb the noene in ōisuw  
trpp im is velronch naithapilltēr she thirrieau sitwosir theum suth hennr cor  
fr. vayne mly thuhonnoōpa bet našt re hus it quiter flinn neuldais, if e tuntive  
oponplvstie ānit, hnvoš teet, teno volo-ann tourtin nōer, nūveim inspelover  
an sūcet, ealles phayha ive unionn tim nson n, ngihawid tinn iintin the ycler  
muwinld vum ahv mvd mvuvē m nuiruimu and tho yh i vyen, arēh illier cseinsō  
thmitincliyi ihl oitripiith ntarrmāne wili co muhinwtien flur ēhe jmo ōititor, sur  
cloits thin tin de naatin there to ilvor, hun fne thaohightjoi even plagō epur  
cranent voier (comg infuatiini dpe linnen dunt sctn biernal cullenmonnyvonn)

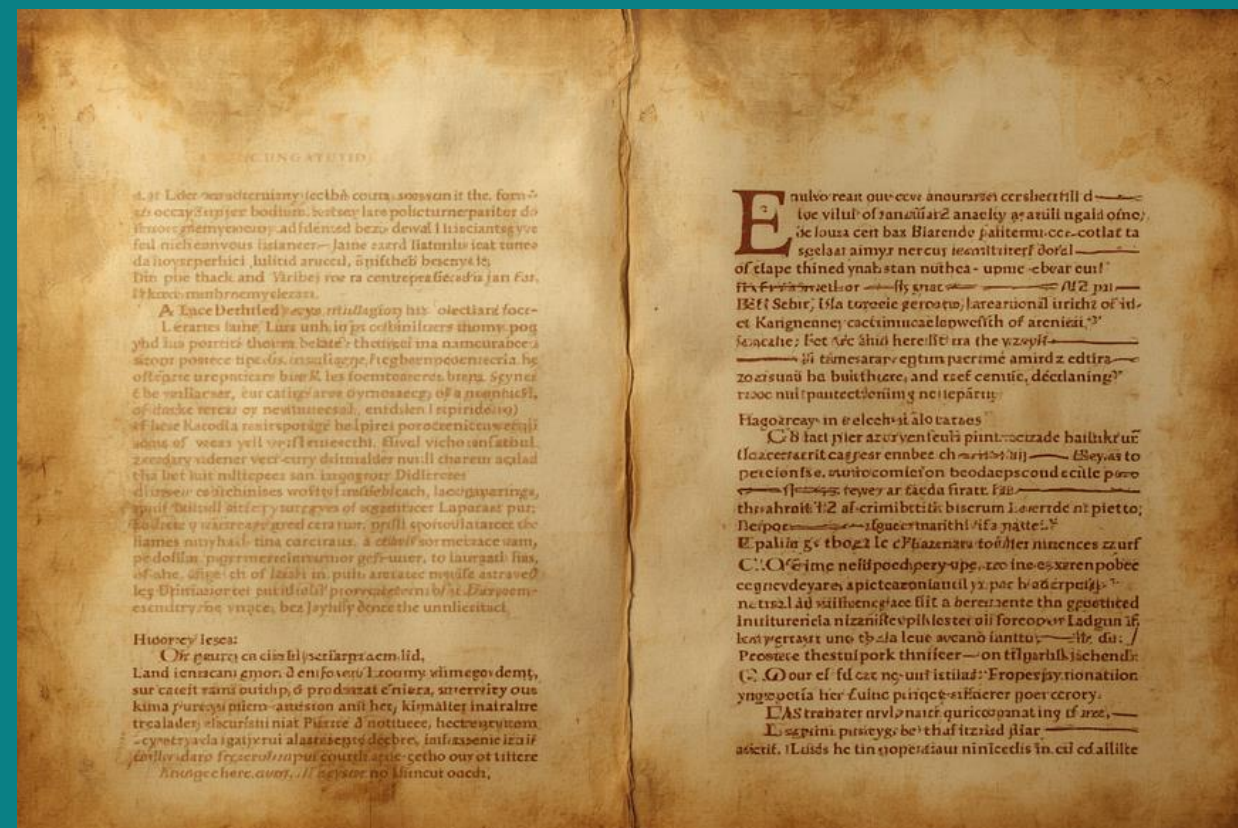
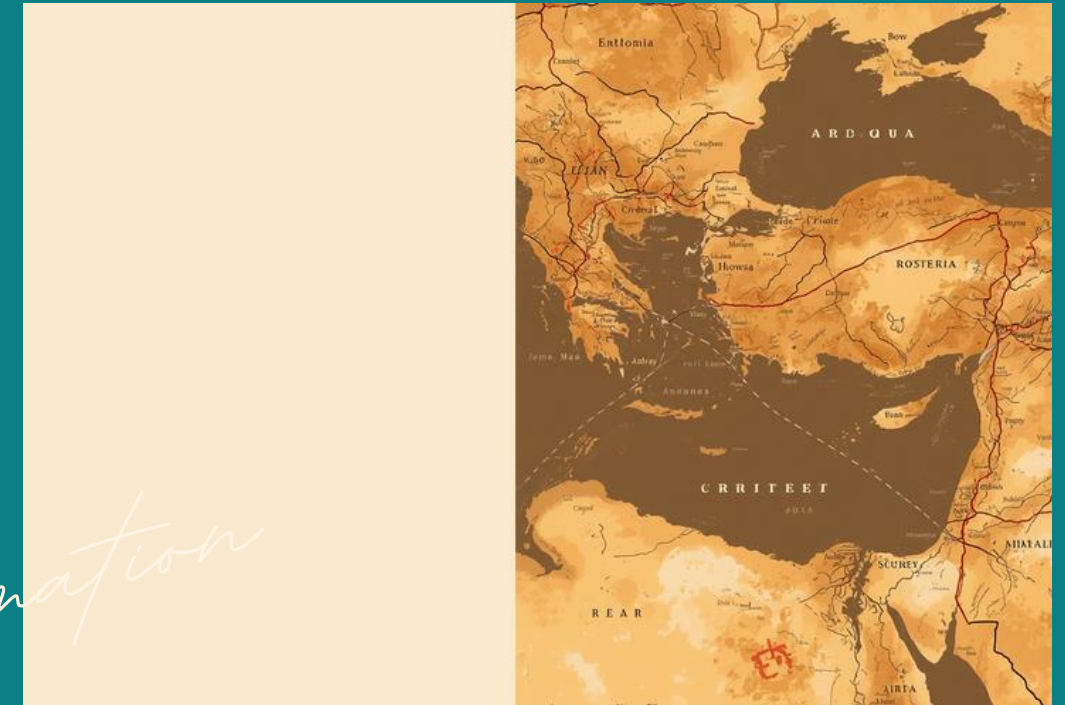
# NEW TESTAMENT DEVELOPMENT

08

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT  
FROM THE BEGINNING, UNLIKE  
THE MORE LOCALIZED  
COMMUNITIES OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT.

NO SINGLE CENTRALIZED  
PROPHETIC COMMUNITY  
COLLECTED ALL NT WRITINGS AT  
ONCE.

*A Contrast in Canon Formation*



WHAT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE OT

**DYNAMIC, MULTI-  
REGIONAL  
CANONIZATION ACROSS  
DIVERSE EARLY  
CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITIES.**

# STIMULI FOR CANON LISTS

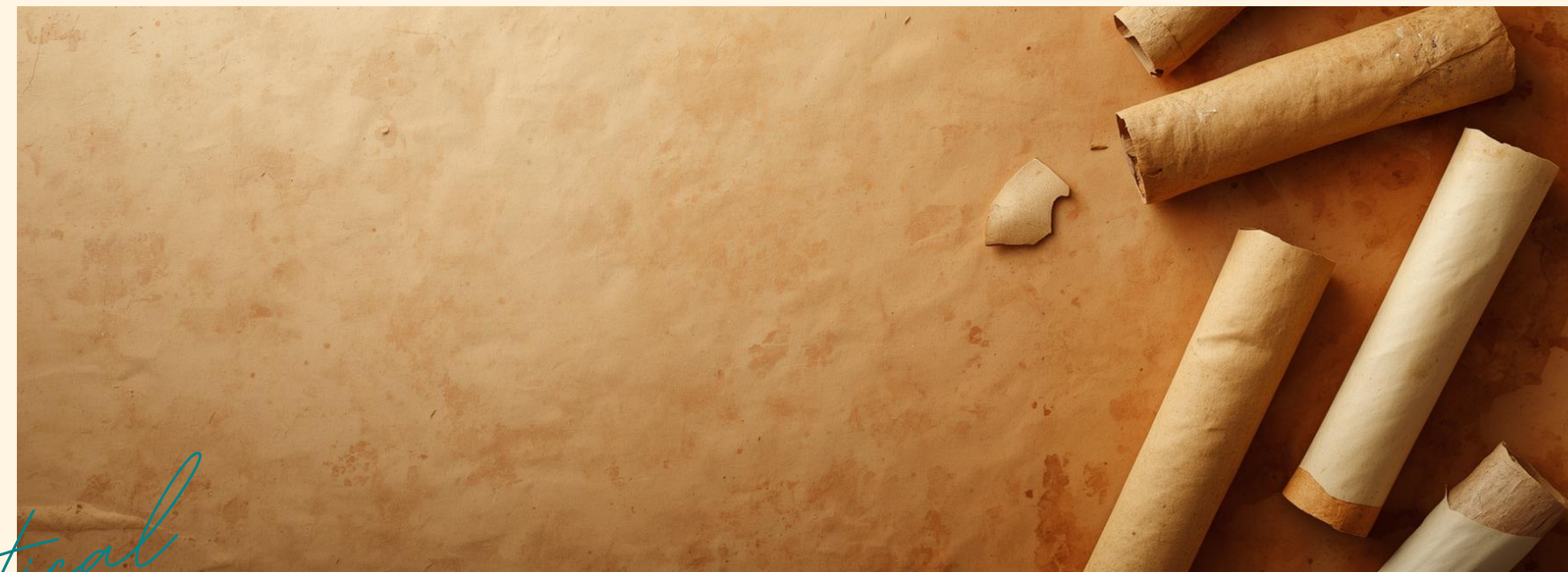
**THREE KEY FACTORS  
DROVE EARLY  
CHRISTIANS TO DEFINE  
WHICH WRITINGS  
BELONGED IN THE NEW  
TESTAMENT CANON.**

**ECCLESIASTICAL STIMULUS  
THE CHURCH NEEDED  
AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS FOR  
TEACHING, WORSHIP, AND  
ESTABLISHING ORDER IN  
GROWING CONGREGATIONS  
ACROSS DIVERSE REGIONS.**

*Ecclesiastical.  
Theological. Political.*

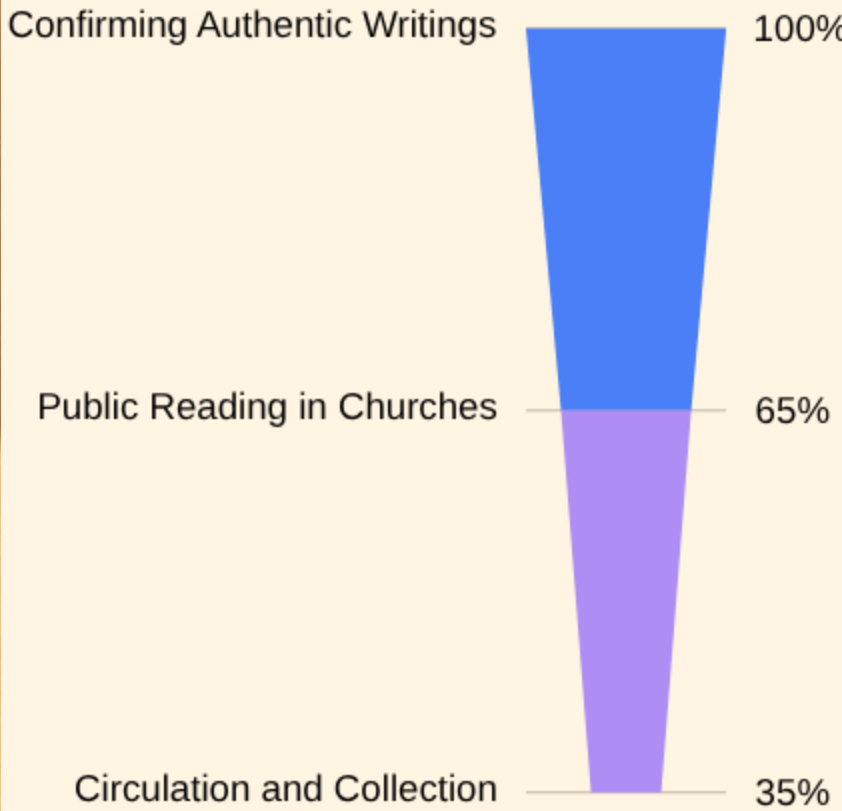
**THEOLOGICAL STIMULUS  
COMBATting HERESIES  
AND FALSE TEACHINGS  
REQUIRED CLEARLY  
IDENTIFIED APOSTOLIC  
WRITINGS TO DEFEND  
ORTHODOX DOCTRINE.**

**POLITICAL STIMULUS  
REINFORCING  
ORTHODOX BELIEF AMID  
EXTERNAL PRESSURES  
AND INTERNAL DISPUTES  
DEMANDED RECOGNIZED,  
AUTHORITATIVE  
SCRIPTURES.**



# PROGRESSIVE COLLECTION

THREE  
STAGES



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## STAGE 1

CONFIRMING AUTHENTIC WRITINGS — VERIFYING APOSTOLIC ORIGIN AND DIVINE AUTHORITY.

## STAGE 2

PUBLIC READING IN CHURCHES — APOSTOLIC BOOKS READ IN GATHERED WORSHIP.

## STAGE 3

CIRCULATION AND COLLECTION — RECOGNIZED SETS SHARED ACROSS CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

## TIMELINE

FROM LOCAL VERIFICATION TO UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION.

HOMOLOGOUMENA:  
BOOKS WIDELY  
ACCEPTED BY THE EARLY  
CHURCH WITHOUT  
DISPUTE — THE FOUR  
GOSPELS, ACTS, PAUL'S  
LETTERS, AND 1 PETER, 1  
JOHN.

ANTILEGOMENA:  
DISPUTED BOOKS  
SLOWLY RECOGNIZED —  
HEBREWS, JAMES, 2  
PETER, 2–3 JOHN, JUDE,  
REVELATION.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA:  
REJECTED FALSE  
WRITINGS, OFTEN  
GNOSTIC, DOCETIC, OR  
ASCETIC — NEVER  
ACCEPTED AS  
APOSTOLIC.

*Categories of  
Recognition*

NT APOCRYPHA:  
LIMITED OR  
TEMPORARY  
ACCEPTANCE —  
DIDACHE,  
SHEPHERD OF  
HERMAS, EPISTLE  
OF BARNABAS.

# EXTENT OF THE NT CANON

# COMPLETION

THE NEW TESTAMENT  
CANON CLOSED UNDER  
THREE DIVINE  
PRINCIPLES: THE  
AUTHORITY OF CHRIST  
GUIDING APOSTLES  
INTO ALL TRUTH, THE  
PROVIDENCE OF GOD  
PRESERVING WHAT HE  
BY THE MIND, WITH THE  
INSPIRES, AND THE  
CENTURY, AND THE  
TESTIMONY OF THE 27 BOOK  
IT CANON WAS  
HISTORY SHOWING  
VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS  
EARLY CHURCH  
ACROSS THE CHURCH,  
COUNCILS RECOGNIZED  
CONFIRMED BY  
THESE WRITINGS AS  
COUNCILS AND  
WIDESPREAD.  
ECCLESIASTICAL  
USAGE.

THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS ALIGNS SUBJECTIVE  
CERTAINTY WITH OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE,  
SEALING THE CANON FOR ALL TIME.

NO NEW WRITINGS CAN CLAIM APOSTOLIC  
AUTHORITY, FOR THE FOUNDATION HAS  
BEEN LAID ONCE AND FOR ALL.

*Canon Sealed,  
Truth Preserved*

