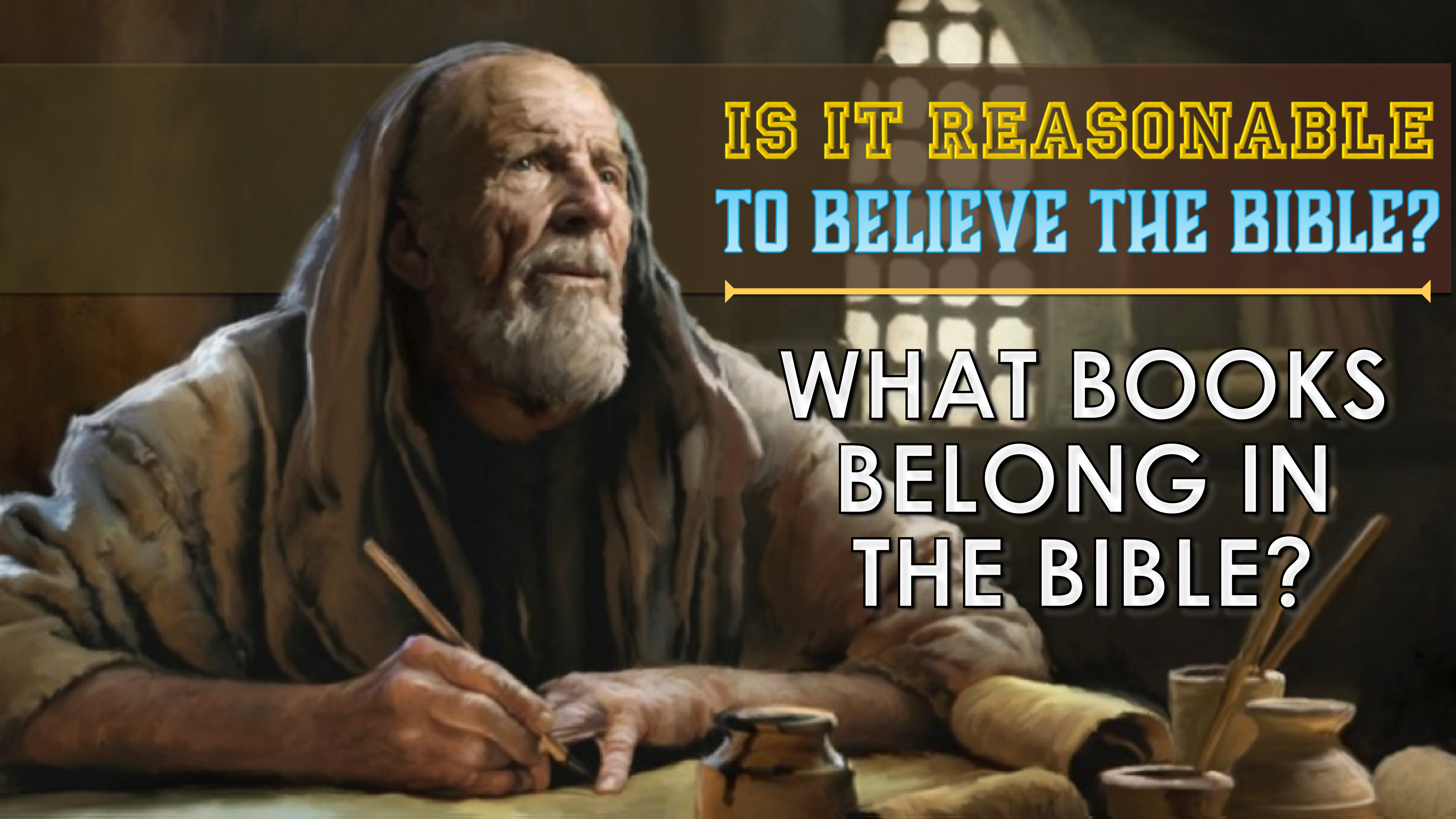
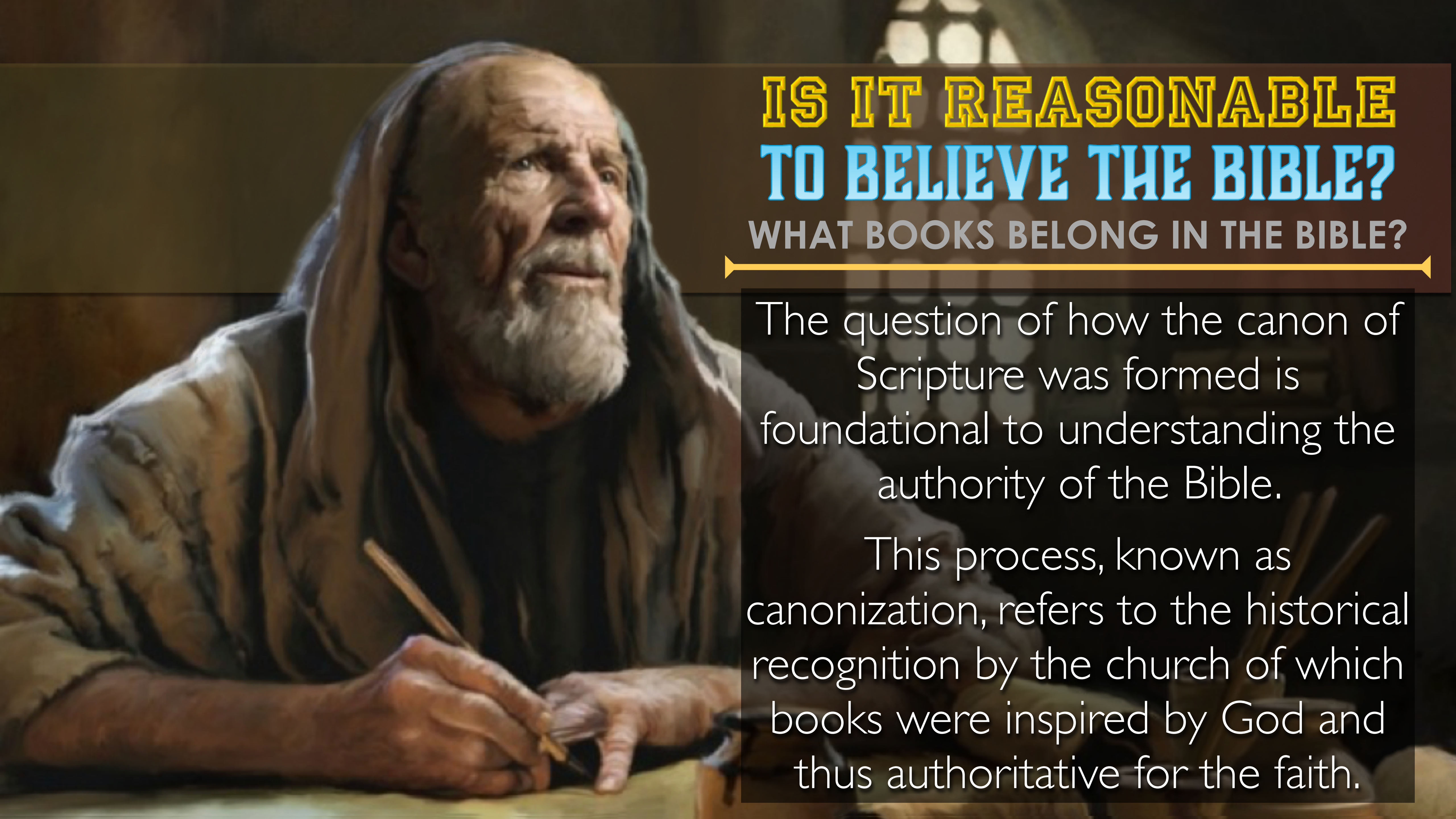


A man with a long white beard and a brown robe is seated at a desk, writing on a scroll with a quill. The desk is cluttered with various items, including a small jar, a scroll, and a quill holder. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting.

**IS IT REASONABLE
TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?**

**WHAT BOOKS
BELONG IN
THE BIBLE?**

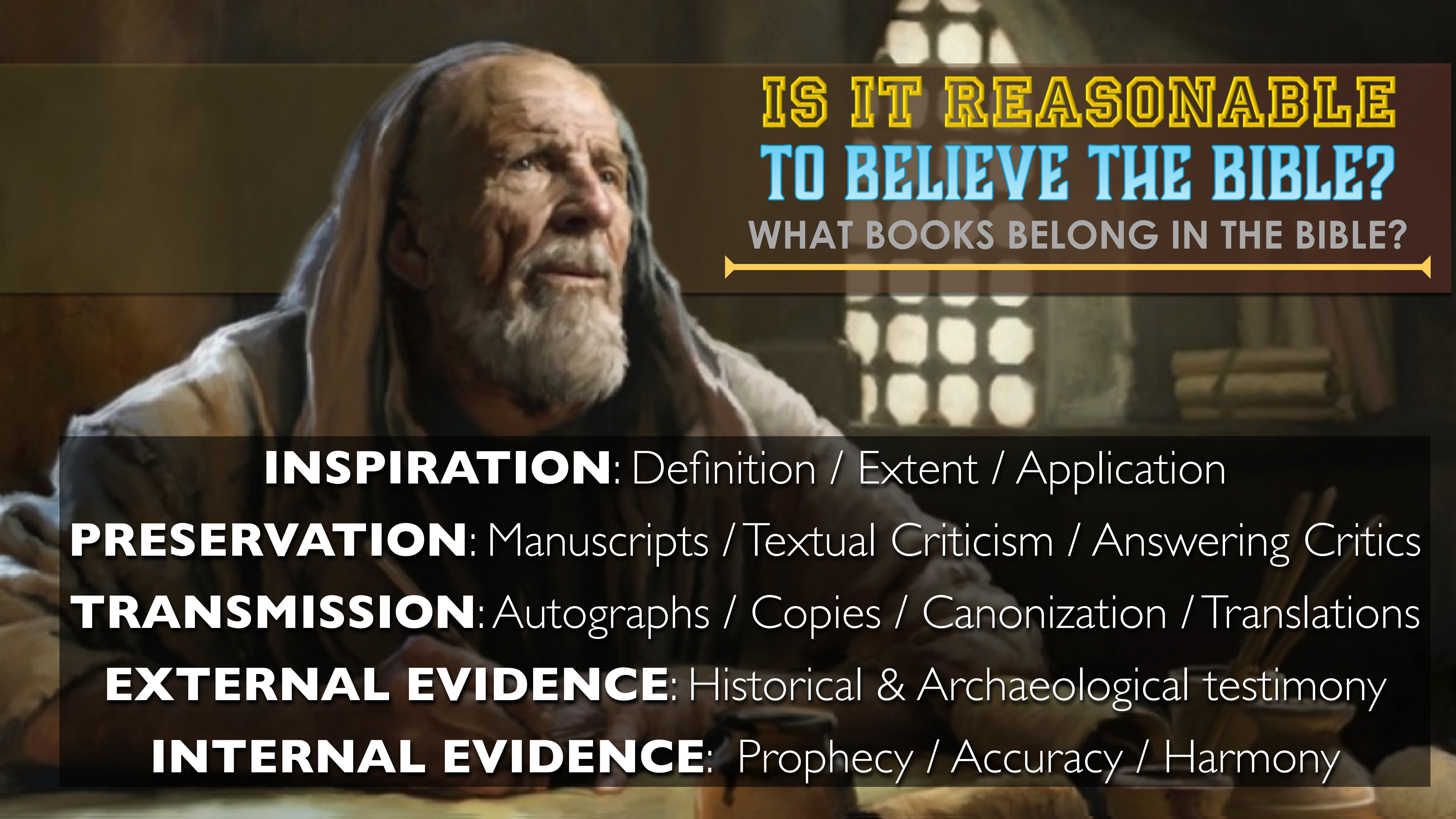


IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The question of how the canon of Scripture was formed is foundational to understanding the authority of the Bible.

This process, known as canonization, refers to the historical recognition by the church of which books were inspired by God and thus authoritative for the faith.



IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

INSPIRATION: Definition / Extent / Application

PRESERVATION: Manuscripts / Textual Criticism / Answering Critics

TRANSMISSION: Autographs / Copies / Canonization / Translations

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE: Historical & Archaeological testimony

INTERNAL EVIDENCE: Prophecy / Accuracy / Harmony

IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

The Bible Under Attack

Education

- ▶ Naturalistic materialism rules the day in academia.
- ▶ Incapable of true reason & logic due to the acceptance of pseudo “reason” and “logic.”
- ▶ A populace conditioned to reject traditional values and “FAITH.”



IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

The Bible Under Attack

If we can't be sure that the words are the right words, how can they be inerrant -- without error, as evangelicals believe?

Text and Image assembled by Hopeful Agnostic
<http://www.facebook.com/hopefulagnostic>

Bart Ehrman
Textual Critic

- The growing militance of the modern skeptic
- Technology / spread & availability of information / saturation of false & skewed information

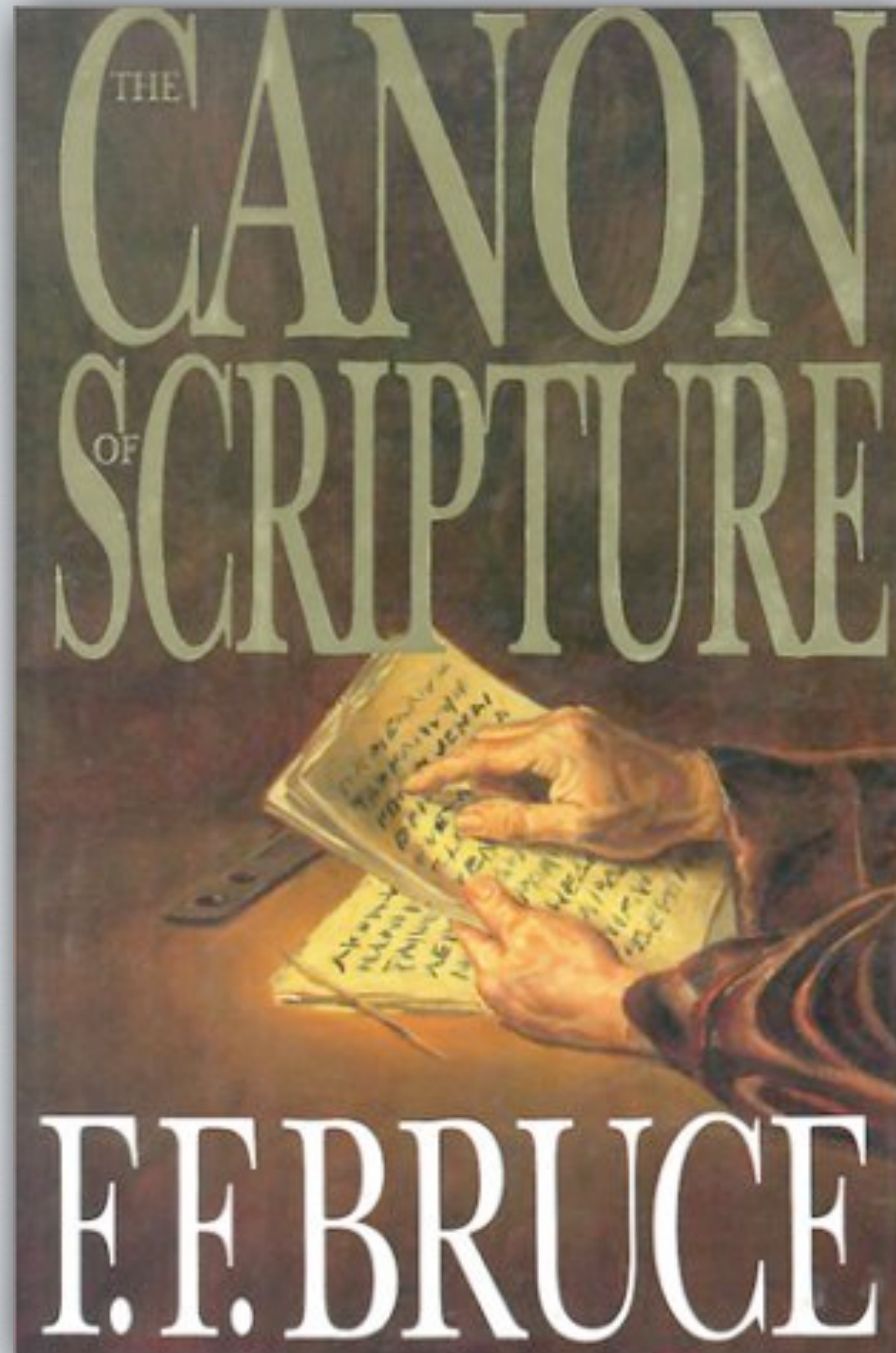
IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

The BIBLE is by far
the best attested
book of antiquity!

Psalms 119:160 (NKJV)

¹⁶⁰ The entirety of Your word is truth,
And every one of Your righteous
judgments *endures* forever.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?



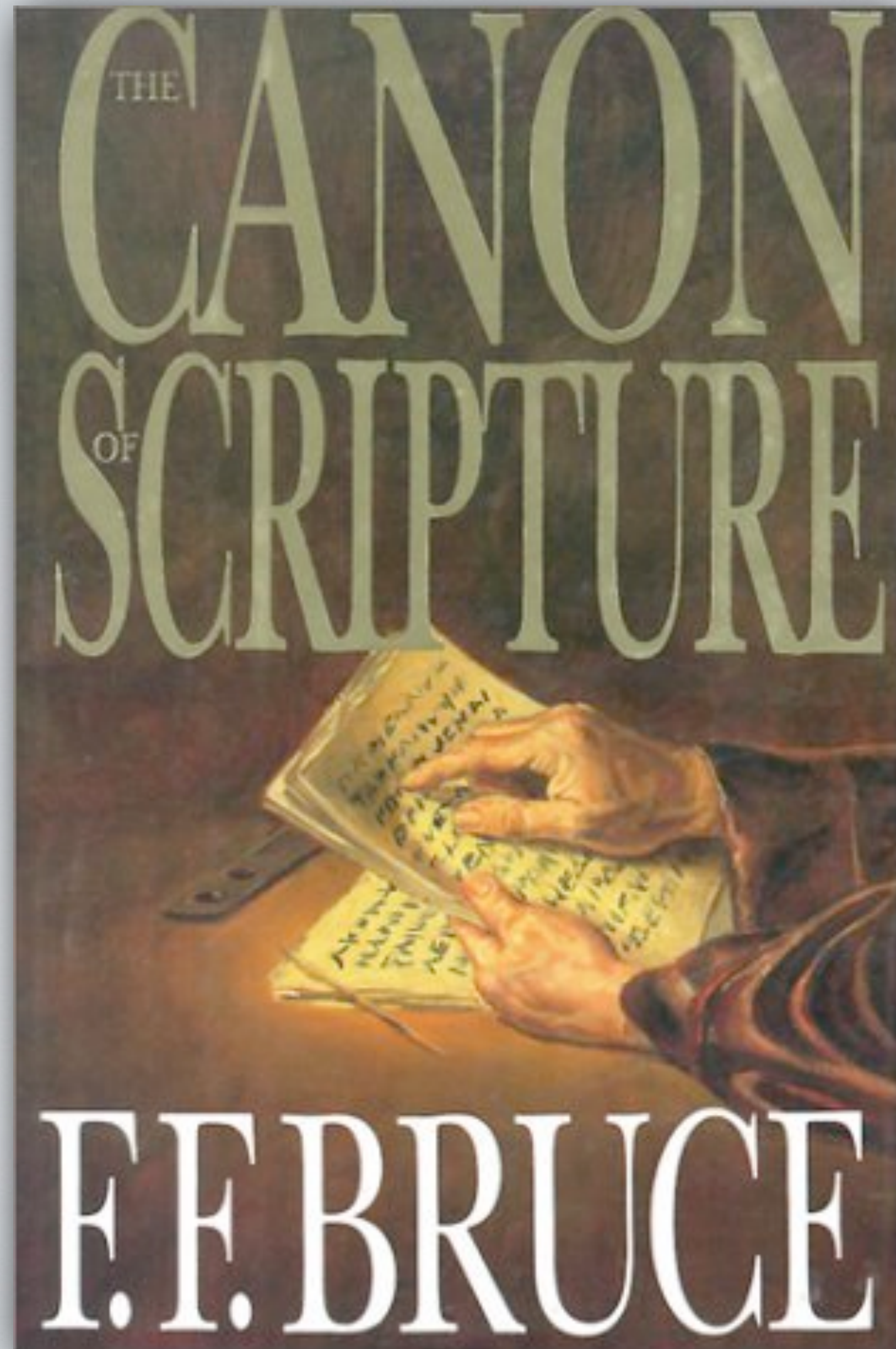
Canonization

QANAH (Hebrew) - a “reed, rod” (cf. Ezekiel 40: 3-8; 42:16-19).

KANNA (Greek) - “a straight rod used as a measuring rule,” thus qualifying it to be a **KANON** (Greek): “a rule, standard” (cp. Galatians 6:16).

CANON (Latin > English) - As applied to the Bible: “the list of sacred books acknowledged to be the rule (standard) of faith and practice”

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?



Canonization

- **CANON:** a measuring rod.
- **SCRIPTURE:** The list of books recognized as inspired and binding for faith and practice.
- **INCLUSION:** Recognized over centuries as writings were composed, received, copied, read in worship, tested, and either kept or set aside.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



The Hebrew Canon

**24 Books divided into three sections
The Law, Prophets, & Writings**

Same, identical content!

The Protestant Canon

**39 Books divided into five sections
The Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets,
& Minor Prophets**

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- While roughly 99% of the Old Testament was written in ancient Hebrew, 268 verses were originally written in Aramaic (*Daniel 2:4b-7:28; Ezra 4:8–6:18 and 7:12–26; Jeremiah 10:11; Genesis 31:47*).
- By the 1st century A.D., Hebrew scripture was already widely circulated as a complete unit and found in synagogues throughout the Roman world.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

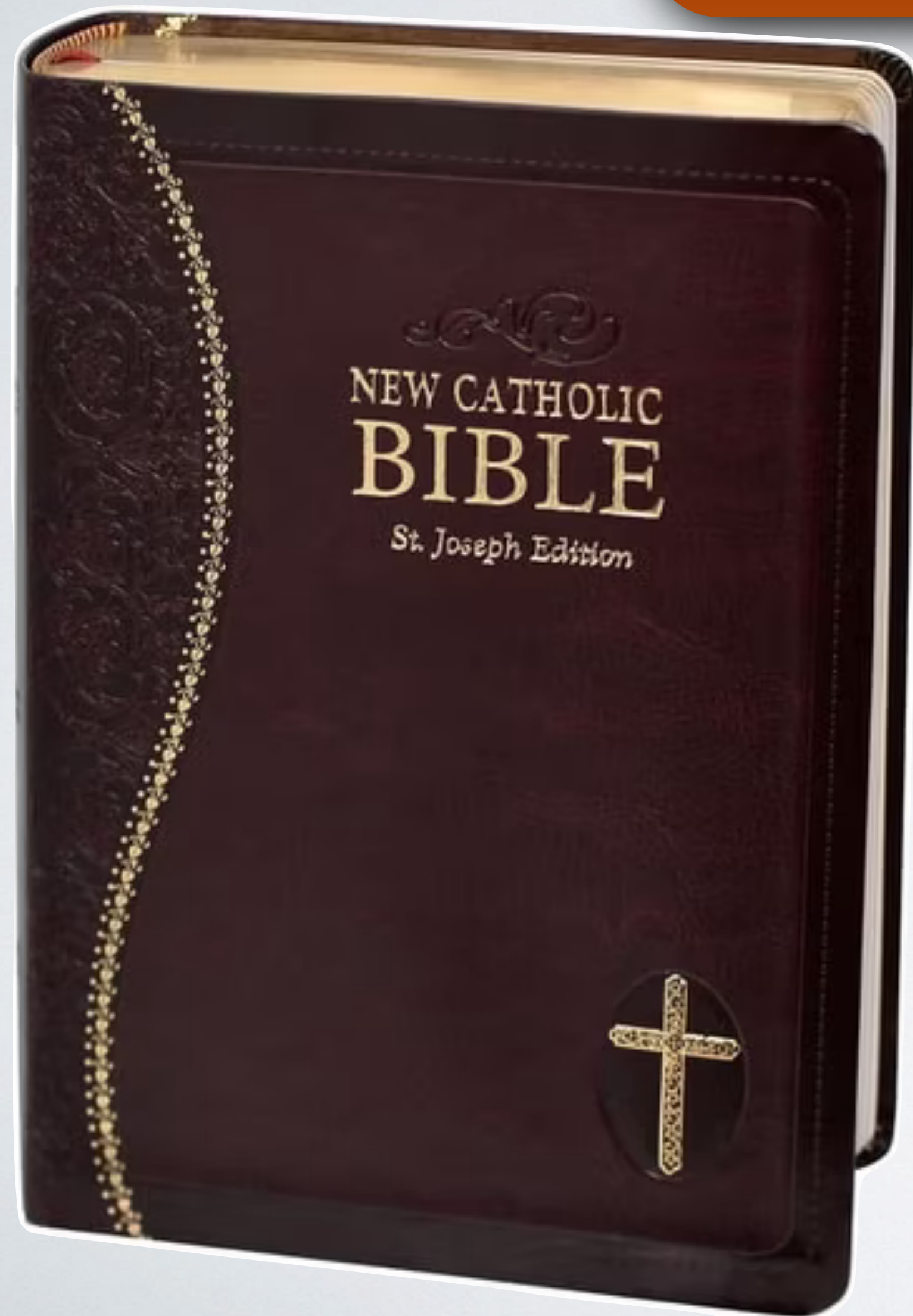
The Old Testament Canon



- They came to a close during the time of Artaxerxes.
- Established among the Jews well before the time of Christ.
- God entrusted the Jews with His word (Romans 3:2).
- **They knew what belonged in the Hebrew canon.**

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon

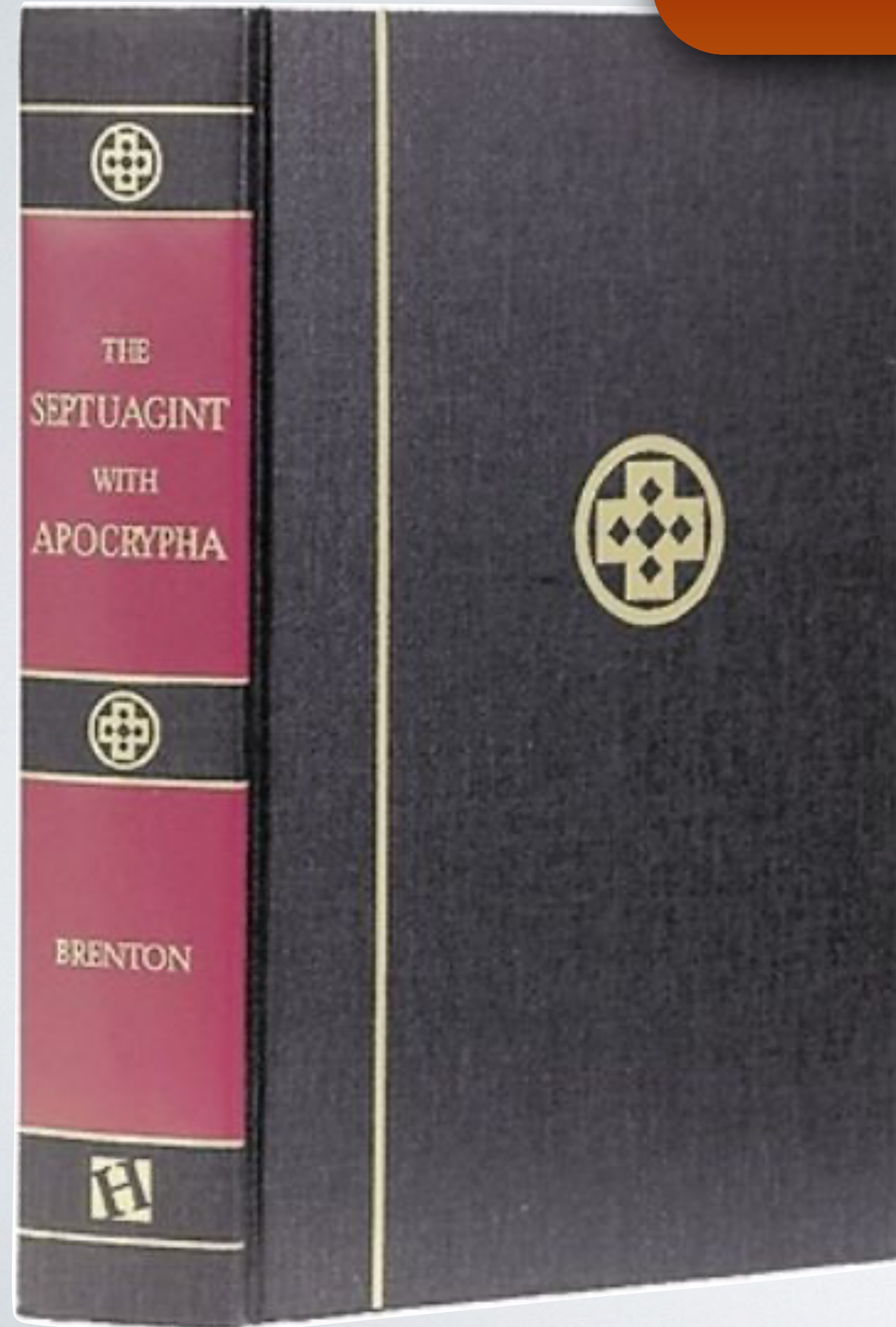


- The Roman Catholic Bible contains 7 more books for a total of 46:

Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, (Epistle of Jeremiah), Additions to Daniel (Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, First & Second Macabees,

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- From the 3rd century BCE, Jews in Egypt translated Scripture into Greek.
- The Septuagint—including the Hebrew books plus additional writings circulating in Greek.
- The mainstream Jewish communities in antiquity did not generally view the additional LXX books as divinely inspired.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon

AGAINST APION



Flavius Josephus

“We do not possess myriads of inconsistent books... Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but twenty-two... five are the books of Moses... from the death of Moses until Artaxerxes the prophets wrote in thirteen books. The remaining four contain hymns to God and precepts for human life.

From Artaxerxes to our own time history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit... because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets.”

This quote is from *Against Apion* (Book 1, Paragraph 8 / Sections 37–42).

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon

- He spoke of it as one unit:

Matthew 22:37–40 (NKJV)

³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon

- He spoke of it as one unit:

Luke 24:44–45 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, “These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.” ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- Jesus referred to the OT as an identifiable body of text (Matthew 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; 26:56; Luke 16:16,29,31; 24:27,44; John 5:45-47; 7:19).
- Jesus did not quote from every OT book, but He did quote from all three divisions – The Law, [Torah], The Prophets, [Nebhiim], The Writings, [Kethubhim].

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- Jesus did not dispute the books of the Hebrew canon with the Jews.
- In fact he urged them to read, believe, and follow the Scriptures they had as authoritative for truth.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- He used the authoritative phrase, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4,7,10; 21:13; 26:24,31; Mark 7:6; 9:12,13; 11:17; 14:21,27; Luke 4:4,8; 7:27; 10:26; 18:31; 19:46; 20:17; 21:22; 22:37; 24:44,46; John 6:45; 8:17; 10:34; 15:25).
- He rebuked the Jews for their ignorance when they did not know the scriptures (Matthew 22:29-32).

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- Jesus referenced the following books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- He referred to the Hebrew Scriptures at least 82 times

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

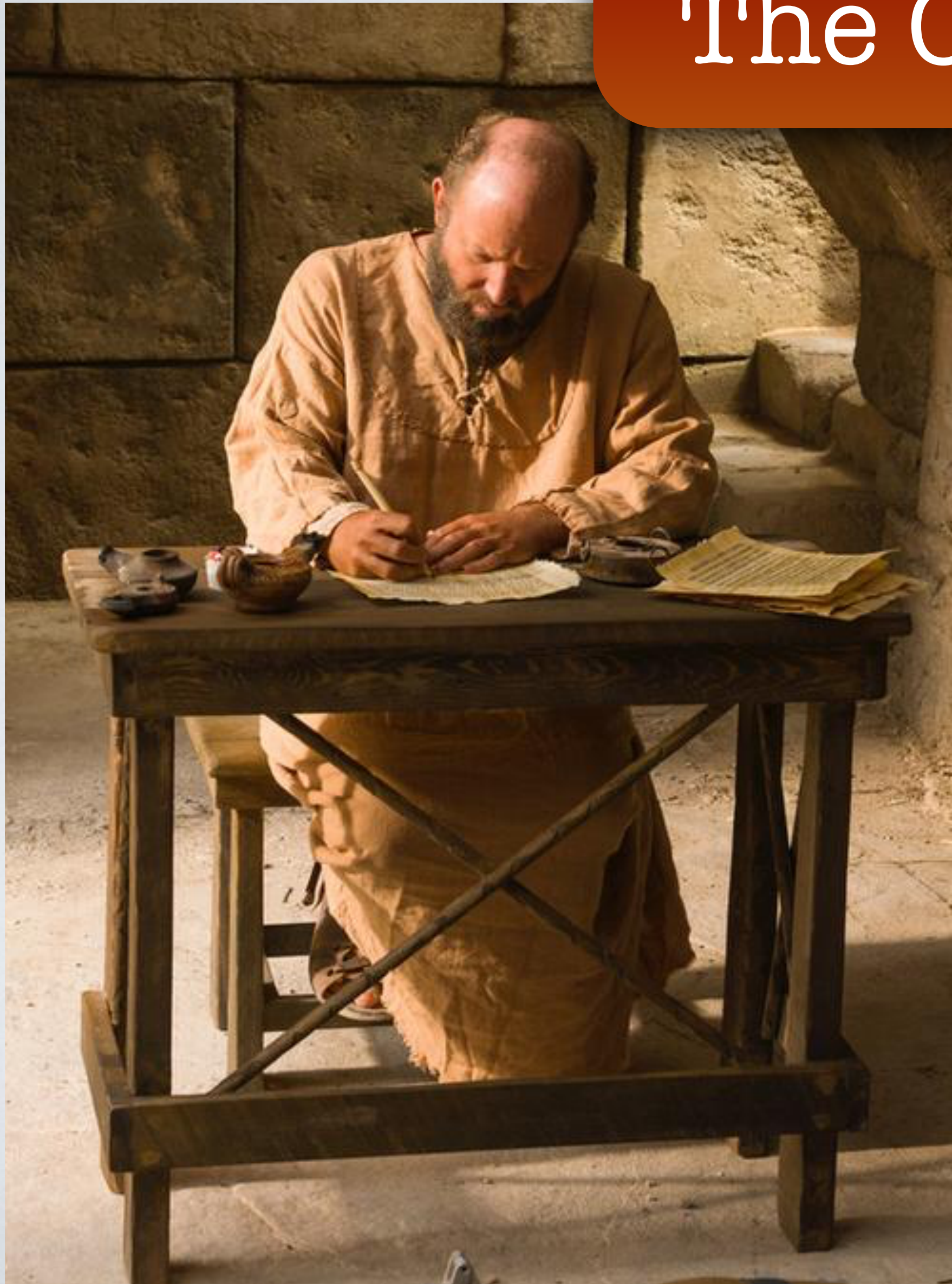
The Old Testament Canon



- He spoke of these Old Testament people by name: Adam, Eve, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lot's wife, Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Isaiah, Zechariah, Daniel.
- He spoke of the prophets as a group of inspired men.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament Canon



- **Paul acknowledged the Hebrew canon as:**
 - ✎ Written for our learning (Romans 15:4)
 - ✎ Written for our admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11)
 - ✎ Profitable for doctrine (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

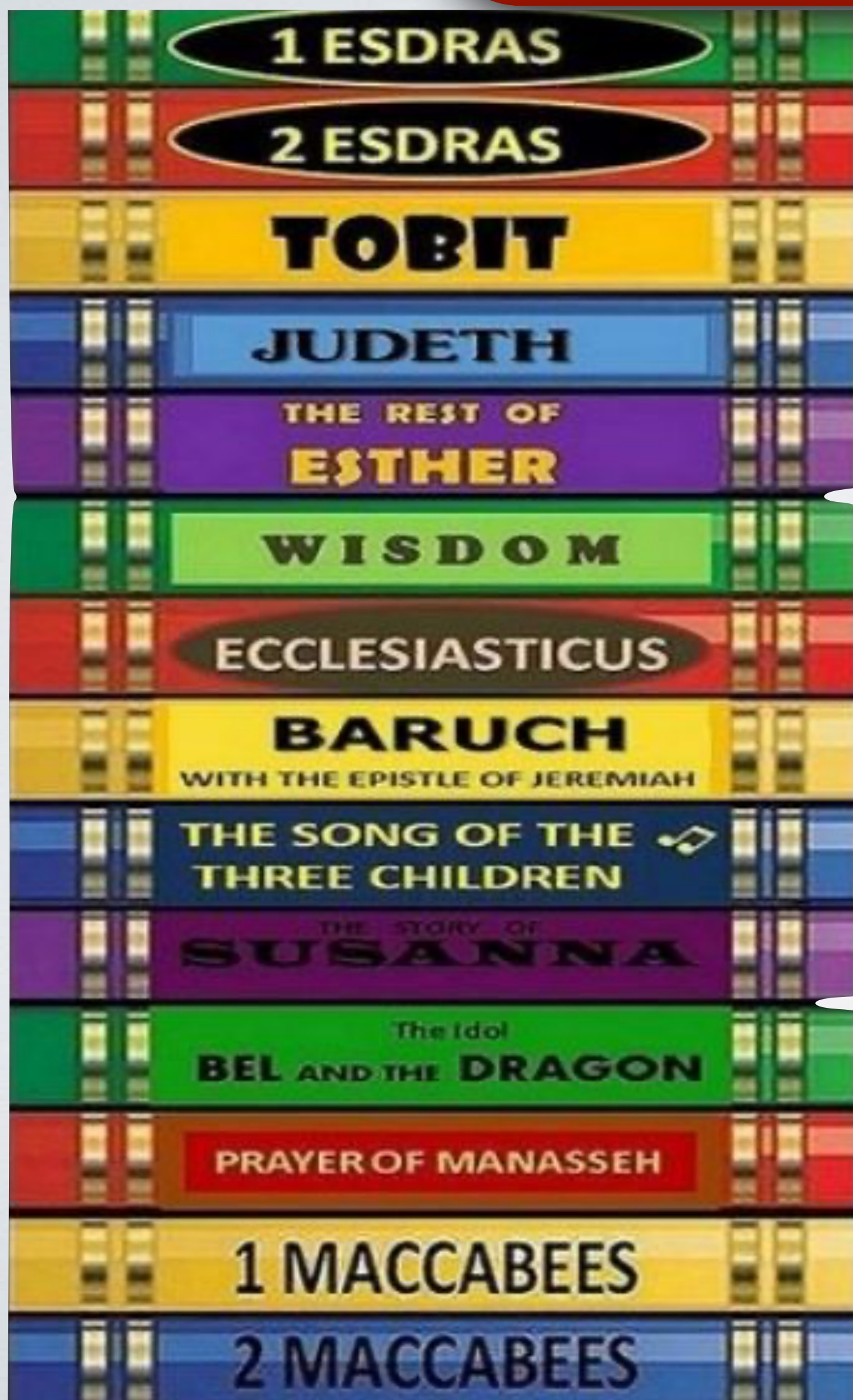
The Old Testament Canon

- 
- The apostles and New Testament writers frequently quoted the LXX, but their quotes were from the books found in the Hebrew canon
 - Books “MOST” Quoted in the NT:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ◆ Isaiah, 419 in 23 books. | ◆ Ezekiel, 141 times in 15 books. |
| ◆ Psalms, 414 times in 23 books | ◆ Daniel, 133 times in 17 books. |
| ◆ Genesis, 260 times in 21 books. | ◆ Jeremiah, 125 times in 17 books. |
| ◆ Exodus, 250 times in 19 books. | ◆ Leviticus, 107 times in 15 books |
| ◆ Deuteronomy, 208 times in 21 books. | ◆ Numbers, 73 times in 4 books. |

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

What About The Apocrypha



- **Apocrypha** (“hidden”) — usual Protestant term (*Athanasius* — “*apocrypha*” means *heretical forgeries*).
- **Deuterocanonical** (“second canon”) — Catholic term, meaning second in time of universal reception, not second in dignity in official Catholic teaching.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

What About The Apocrypha

Apocrypha Book	Type / Theme or Content	App. date
Tobit	Pious story: almsgiving, angels, marriage	200 B.C.
Judith	Tale of a heroine who saves Israel	150 B.C.
Wisdom of Solomon	Greek wisdom theology	30 B.C.
Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)	Hebrew wisdom, translated into Greek	132 B.C
Baruch + Letter of Jeremiah	Prayer and polemic against idols	150-50 B.C.
1 & 2 Maccabees	History of the Jewish revolt / Theological history; prayers for the dead	110 B.C.
Additions to Esther	Greek expansions (10:4-16:24)	140-130 B.C.
Additions to Daniel	Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three, (3:24-90); Susanna, (13); Bel and the Dragon (14)	100 B.C.
Prayer of Manasseh	Prayer of deep repentance, request for divine mercy.	100 B.C.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

What About The Apocrypha

WHO ACCEPTS THE APOCRYPHA?

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

TOBIT
JUDITH
ADDITIONS OF ESTHER
WISDOM OF SOLOMON
SIRACH
BARUCH
LETTER OF JEREMIAH
SONG OF THREE
SUSANNA
BEL AND THE DRAGON

1 MACCABEES
2 MACCABEES

GREEK ORTHODOX

1 ESDRAS

TOBIT
JUDITH
ADDITIONS OF ESTHER
WISDOM OF SOLOMON
SIRACH
BARUCH
LETTER OF JEREMIAH
SONG OF THREE
SUSANNA
BEL AND THE DRAGON
PRAYER OF MANASSEH

1 MACCABEES
2 MACCABEES
3 MACCABEES
4 MACCABEES
PSALM 151

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX

1 ESDRAS

2 ESDRAS
TOBIT
JUDITH
ADDITIONS OF ESTHER
WISDOM OF SOLOMON
SIRACH
BARUCH
LETTER OF JEREMIAH
SONG OF THREE
SUSANNA
BEL AND THE DRAGON
PRAYER OF MANASSEH

1 MACCABEES
2 MACCABEES
3 MACCABEES

PSALM 151

COPTIC

1 ESDRAS

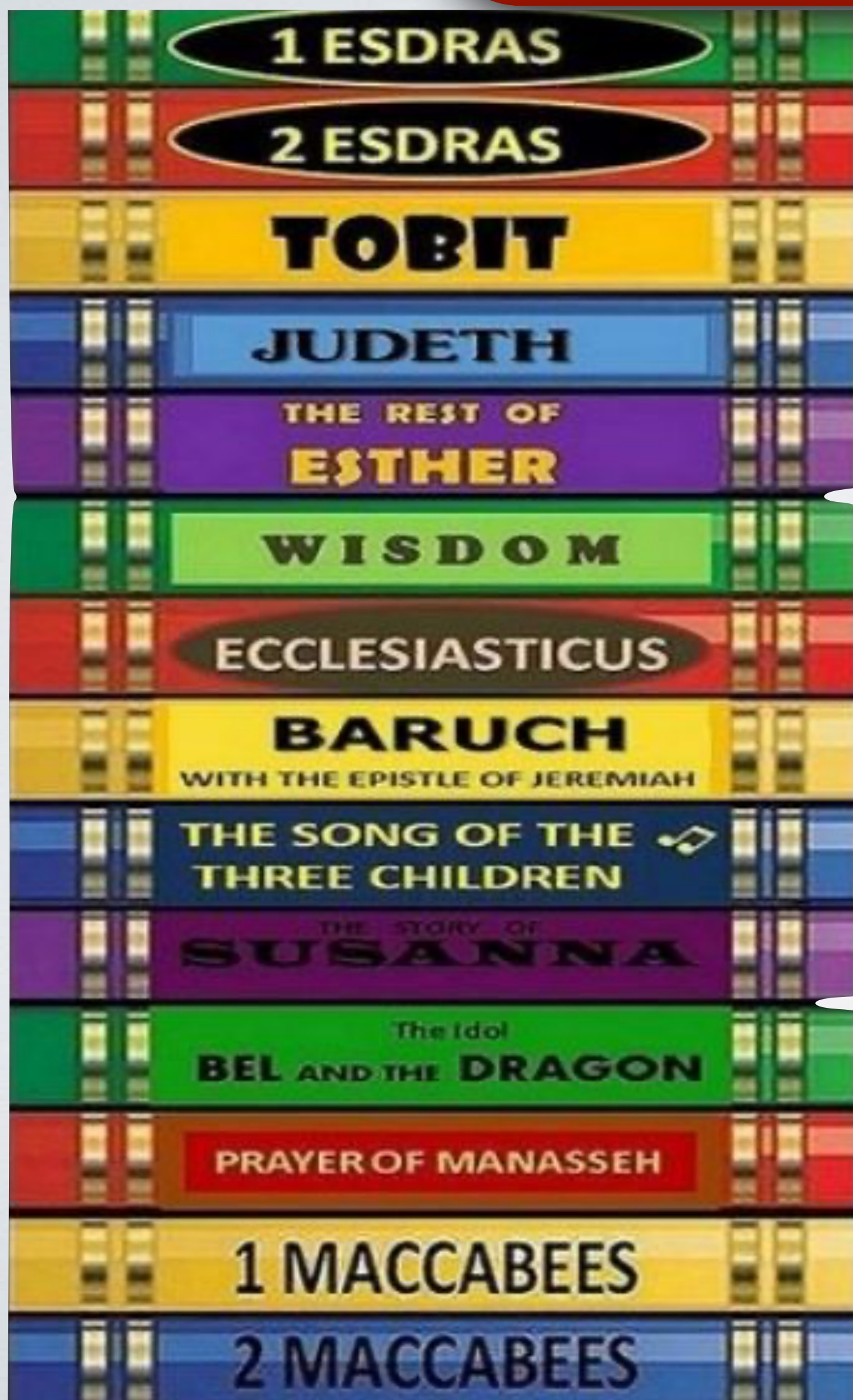
2 ESDRAS
TOBIT
JUDITH
ADDITIONS OF ESTHER
WISDOM OF SOLOMON
SIRACH
BARUCH
LETTER OF JEREMIAH
SONG OF THREE
SUSANNA
BEL AND THE DRAGON
PRAYER OF MANASSEH

1 MACCABEES
2 MACCABEES
3 MACCABEES

PSALM 151

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

What About The Apocrypha

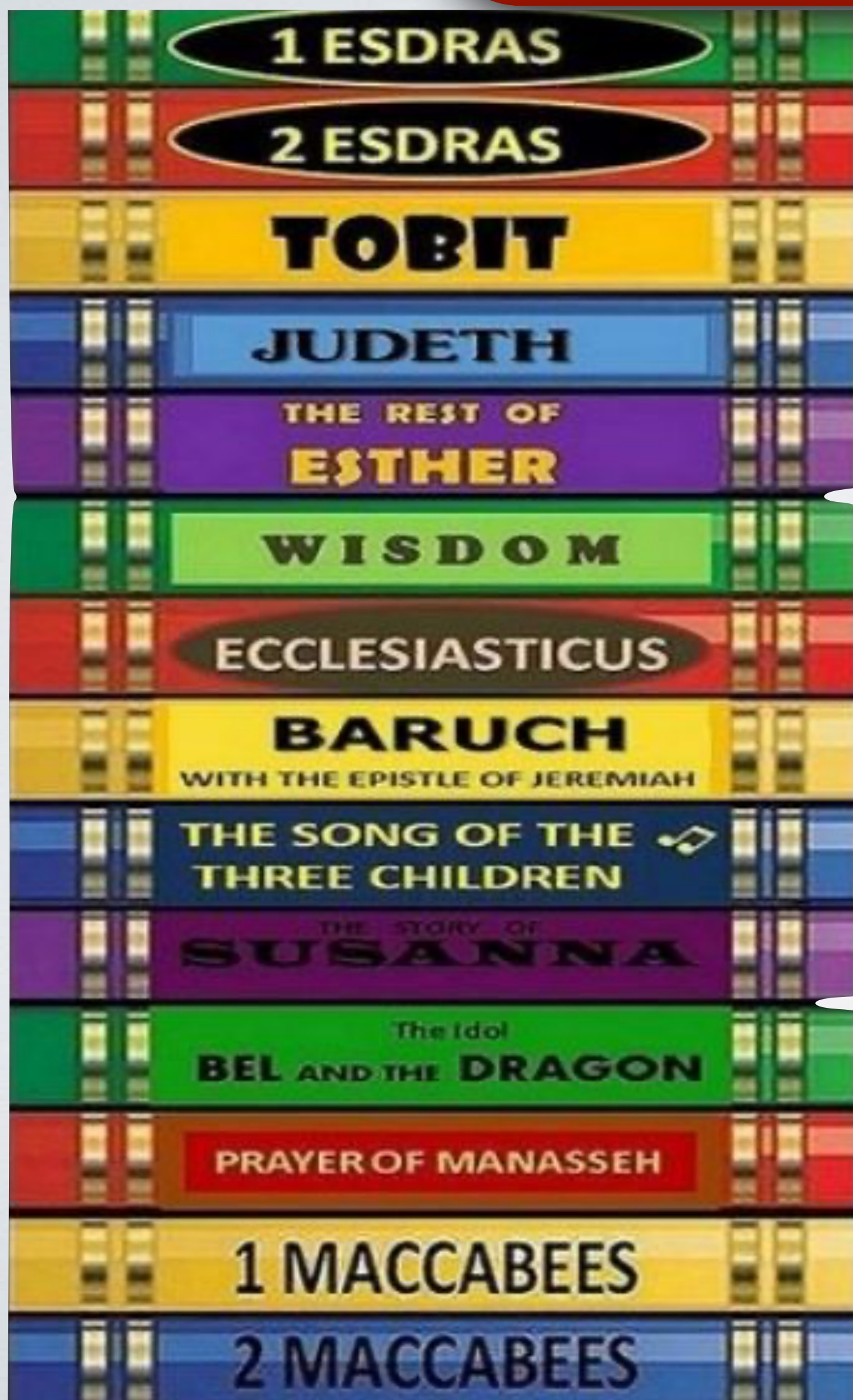


■ Why Reject The Apocrypha:

- Never sanctioned or quoted by Jesus, the apostles, nor any NT writer.
- Never part of the Hebrew canon; They were not in the collection Josephus treated as uniquely authoritative, nor in the rabbinic Tanakh. “The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2).
- Recognized as works of men, not God.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

What About The Apocrypha

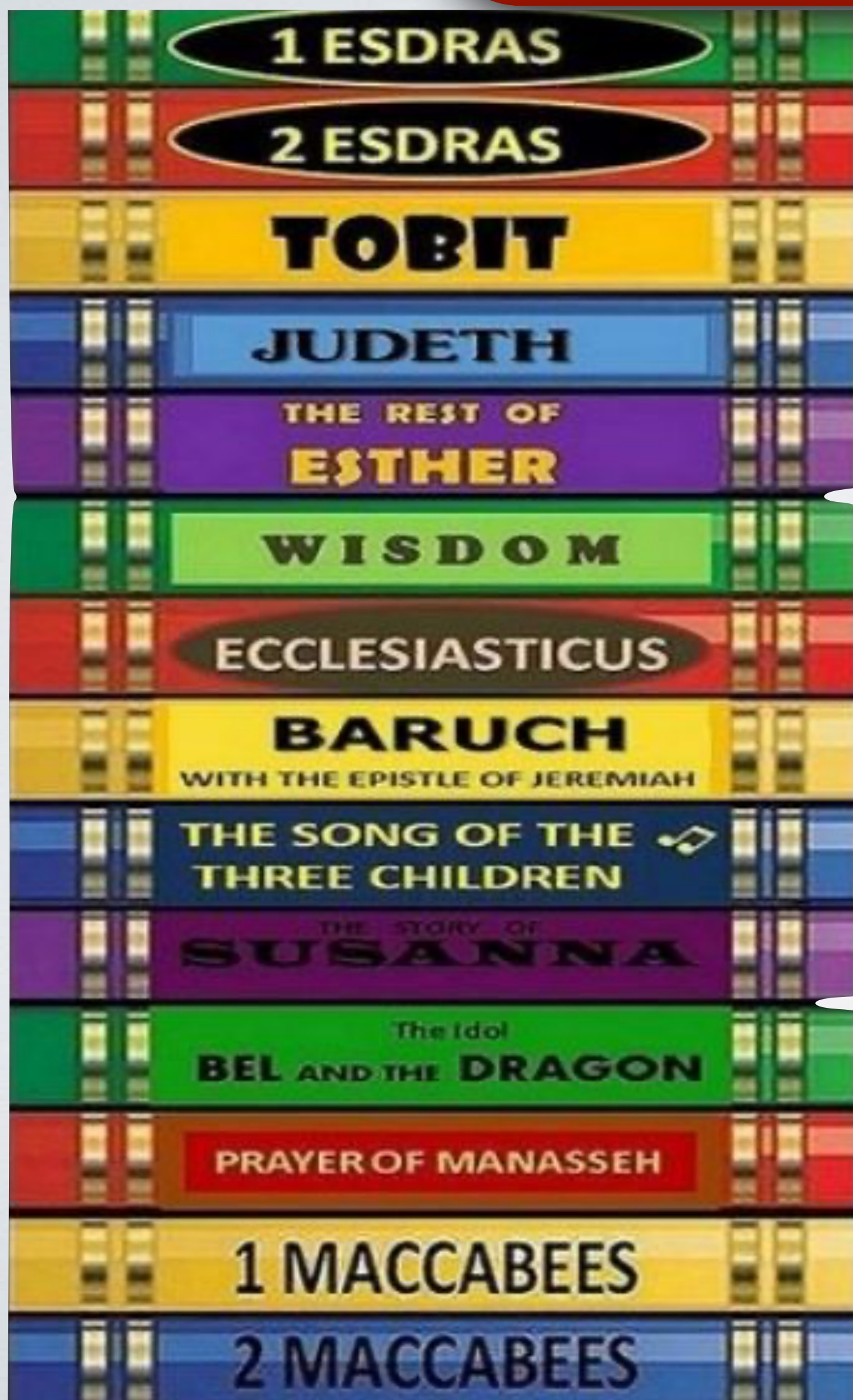


■ Why Reject The Apocrypha:

- ✂ Rejected by the early “church fathers.”
- ✂ It wasn’t until the fourth century A.D. that the apocryphal books were placed alongside canonical books as books helpful to read, (397), but not considered equal to Scripture.
- ✂ The Roman Catholic church elevated them to canonicity during the Council of Trent (1546).
- ✂ They contain historical inaccuracies and teachings inconsistent with God’s word.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

What About The Apocrypha



■ Why Reject The Apocrypha:

- ✧ Their inclusion provided the Catholic church with texts to support their false doctrines which lacked support in (and contradicted by) the other books.
- ✧ Realizing all of this, we must do what so many have done (including many Catholics in the past) and reject these extra books as uninspired works of men (cf. Revelation 22:18-19).

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Criteria For Canonical Books

OLD TESTAMENT

Recognition within Israel as sacred Scripture.

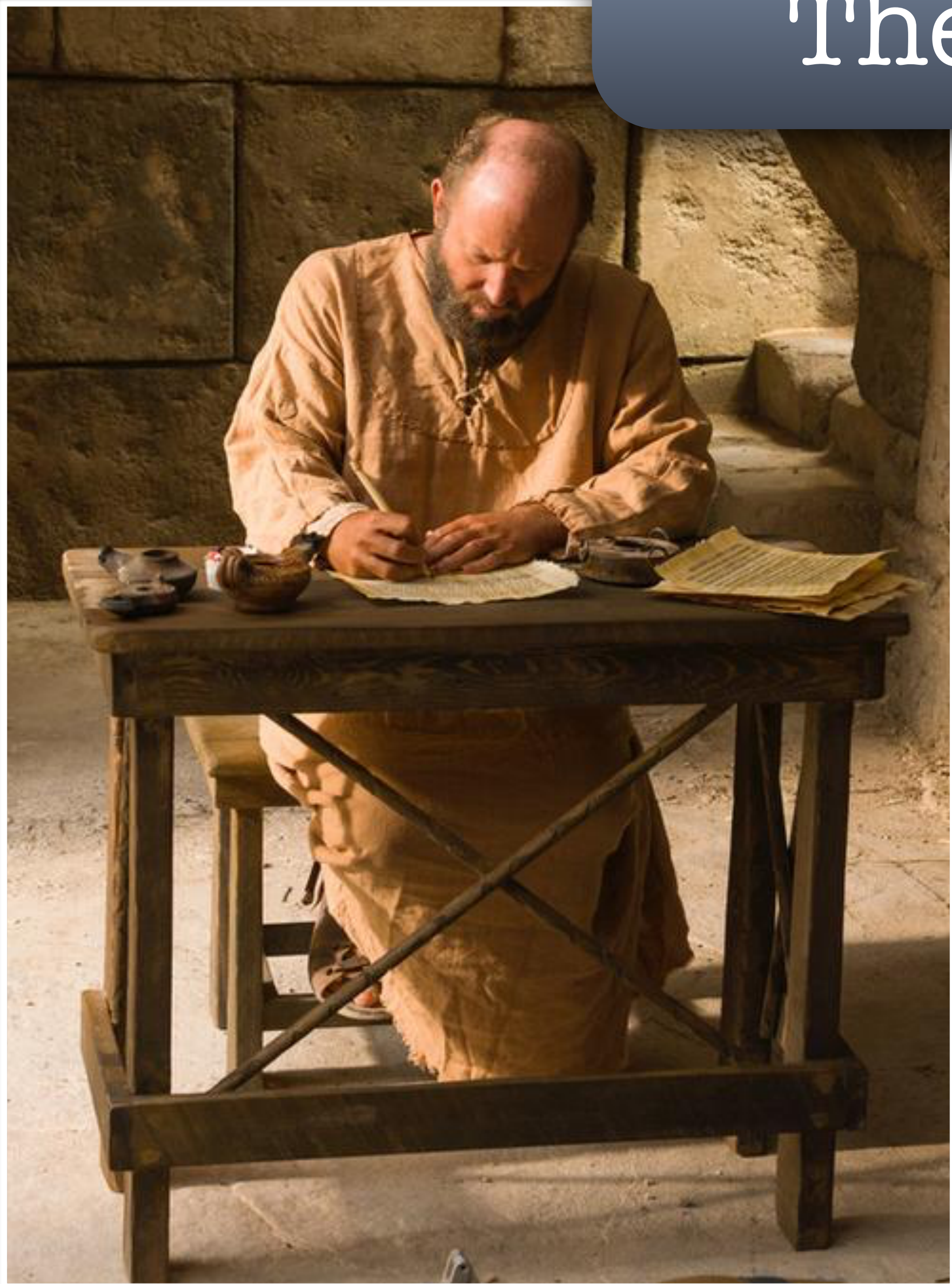
Origin in the period when prophecy was understood to be active (Josephus's "succession of prophets").

Acknowledged by Jesus and the apostles as being from God

Consistency with already recognized Scripture.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon



- Liberal scholars claim much of the NT wasn't written until the late second or early third century A.D.
- Assertion that the Roman Catholic Church decided the legitimacy of the NT books in the late fourth century A.D.
- After each book of the NT was written, it was circulated and read among Christians and considered authoritative (Col 4:16; 1 Thes 5:27).

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Manuscript	Date	Contents
John Rylands	125-130 in Egypt	John 18:31-33,37
Bodmer Papyrus	150-200	First 14 chapters of John
Chester Beatty Papyri	200	Major portions of N.T. Matthew-Acts, Epistles of Paul to churches, Hebrews, Revelation
Codex Vaticanus	325-350	Most N.T. through Hebrews
Codex Sinaiticus	350	Entire N.T. & large portions of Greek O.T.
Codex Alexandrinus	400	Greek O.T. & most of N.T.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

Rylands Library
Papyrus P52, also
known as the St.
John's fragment -
125-130 AD -
Egypt



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rylands_Library_Papyrus_P52

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Gospel of John 18:31-33 (recto)

ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ ΗΜΕΙΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΞΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΠΟΚΤΕΙΝΑΙ
ΟΥΔΕΝΑ ΙΝΑ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΠΛΗΡΩΘΗ ΟΝ ΕΙ-
ΠΕΝ ΣΗΜΑΙΝΩΝ ΠΟΙΩ ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΗΜΕΛΛΕΝ ΑΠΟ-
ΘΗΣΚΕΙΝ ΙΣΗΛΘΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΡΑΙΤΩ-
ΡΙΟΝ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΩΝΗΣΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΝ
ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΣΥ ΕΙ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥ-
ΔΑΙΩΝ

the Jews, "For us it is not permitted to kill **anyone," so that the** word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he sp-
oke signifying what kind of death he was going to **die. Entered** therefore again into the Praeto-
rium Pilate and summoned Jesus **and said** to him, "Thou art king of the **Jews?"**

y_Papyrus_P52

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Gospel of John 18:37-38 (verso)



ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΓΕΓΕΝΝΗΜΑΙ
ΚΑΙ (ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ) ΕΛΗΛΥΘΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ ΙΝΑ ΜΑΡΤΥ-
ΡΗΣΩ ΤΗ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΠΑΣ Ο ΩΝ ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙ-
ΑΣ ΑΚΟΥΕΙ ΜΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΦΩΝΗΣ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΩ
Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΤΙ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΤΟ
ΕΙΠΩΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΞΗΛΘΕΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΙΟΥ-
ΔΑΙΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΕΓΩ ΟΥΔΕΜΙΑΝ
ΕΥΡΙΣΚΩ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΑΙΤΙΑΝ

a King I am. For **this I have been born**
and (for this) I have come into the **world so that I would test-**
ify to the truth. Everyone who is **of the truth**
hears of me my voice." **Said to him**
Pilate, "What is truth?" **and this**
having said, again he went out unto **the Jews**
and said to them, "I find **not one**
fault **in him.**"

<http://en.wik>

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon



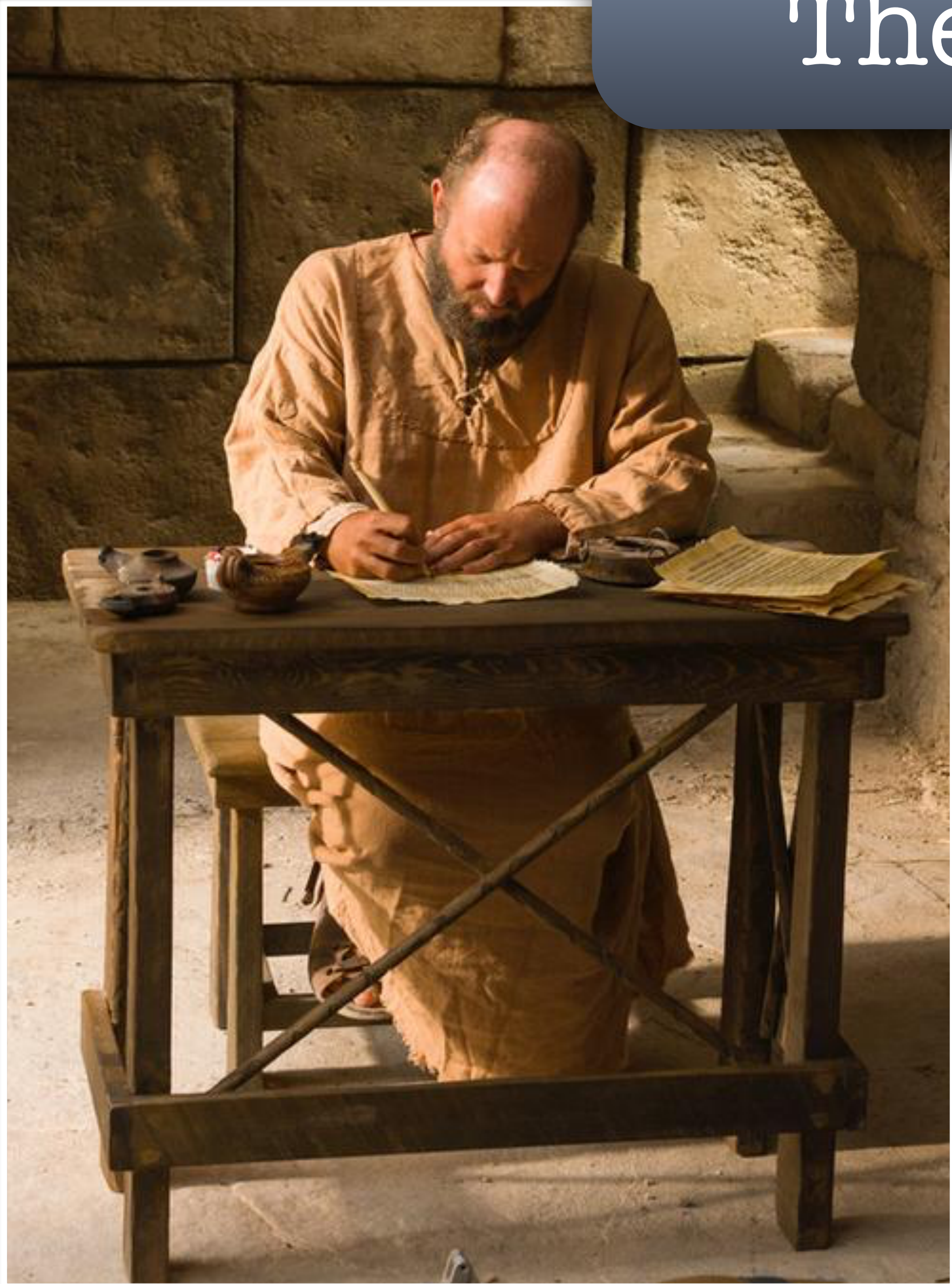
- Church "Fathers" – ca. 36,000 citations –
- Apologists and text critics claim that we can reconstruct approximately 60% to 70% of the New Testament text from the first four centuries alone.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Total
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement Alex.	1,017	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,922
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

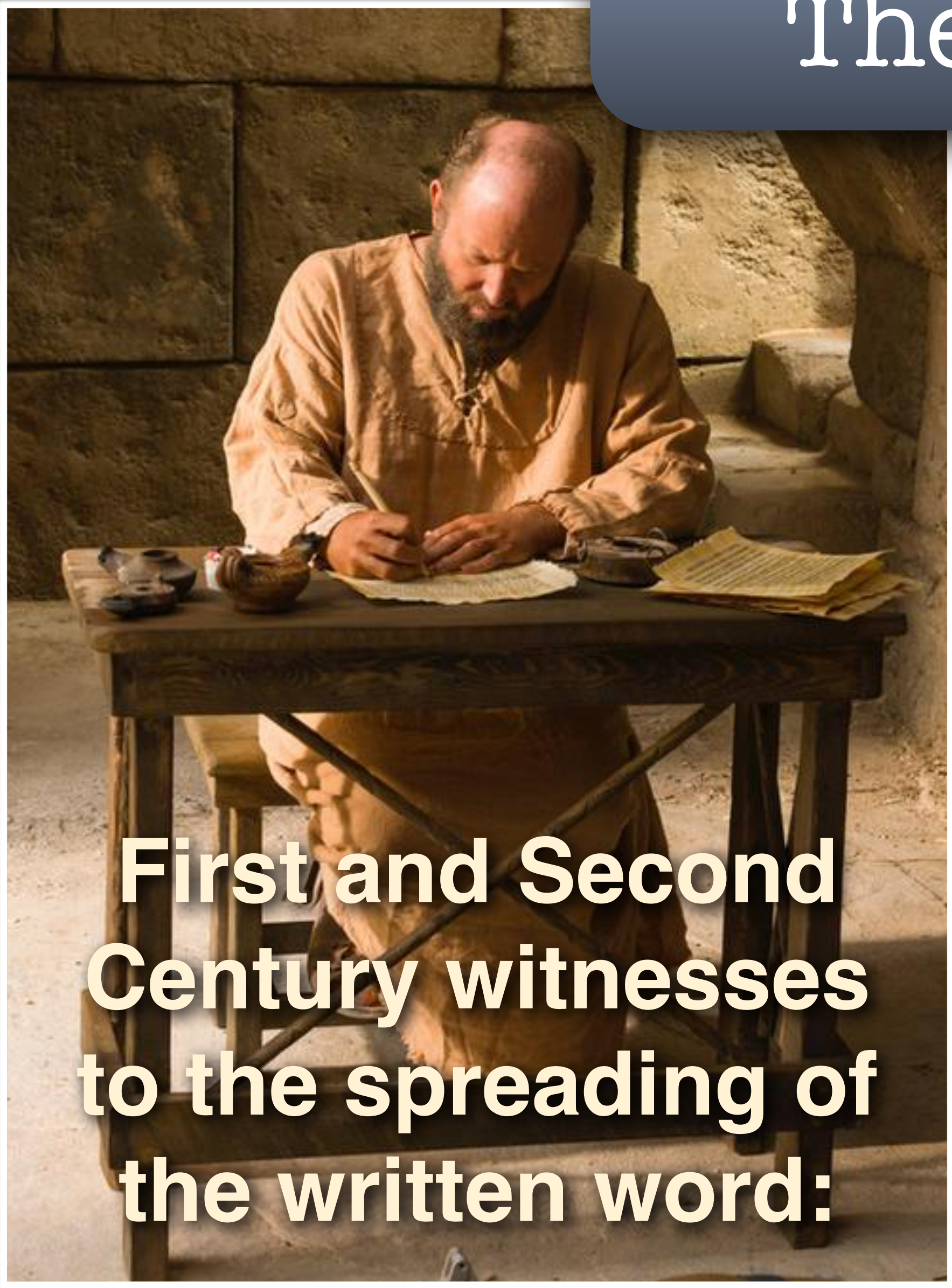


- The New Testament canon did not emerge from a single council vote.
- It emerged from the recognition of writings that were already functioning as Scripture in the churches for 200 + years.
- By the middle of the second century a solid core was widely known and used.
- By the late fourth century the precise 27-book collection had become the common list of most of the church.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

- Clement of Rome (ca. A.D. 30-100).
- Ignatius of Antioch (ca. A.D. 30-115).
- Polycarp (ca. A.D. 69-155)
- Papias (ca. A.D. 70-140)
- Marcion [Gnostic] (ca. A.D. 144)
- Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 100-165)
- The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170)
- Theophilus (ca. A.D. 115-188)

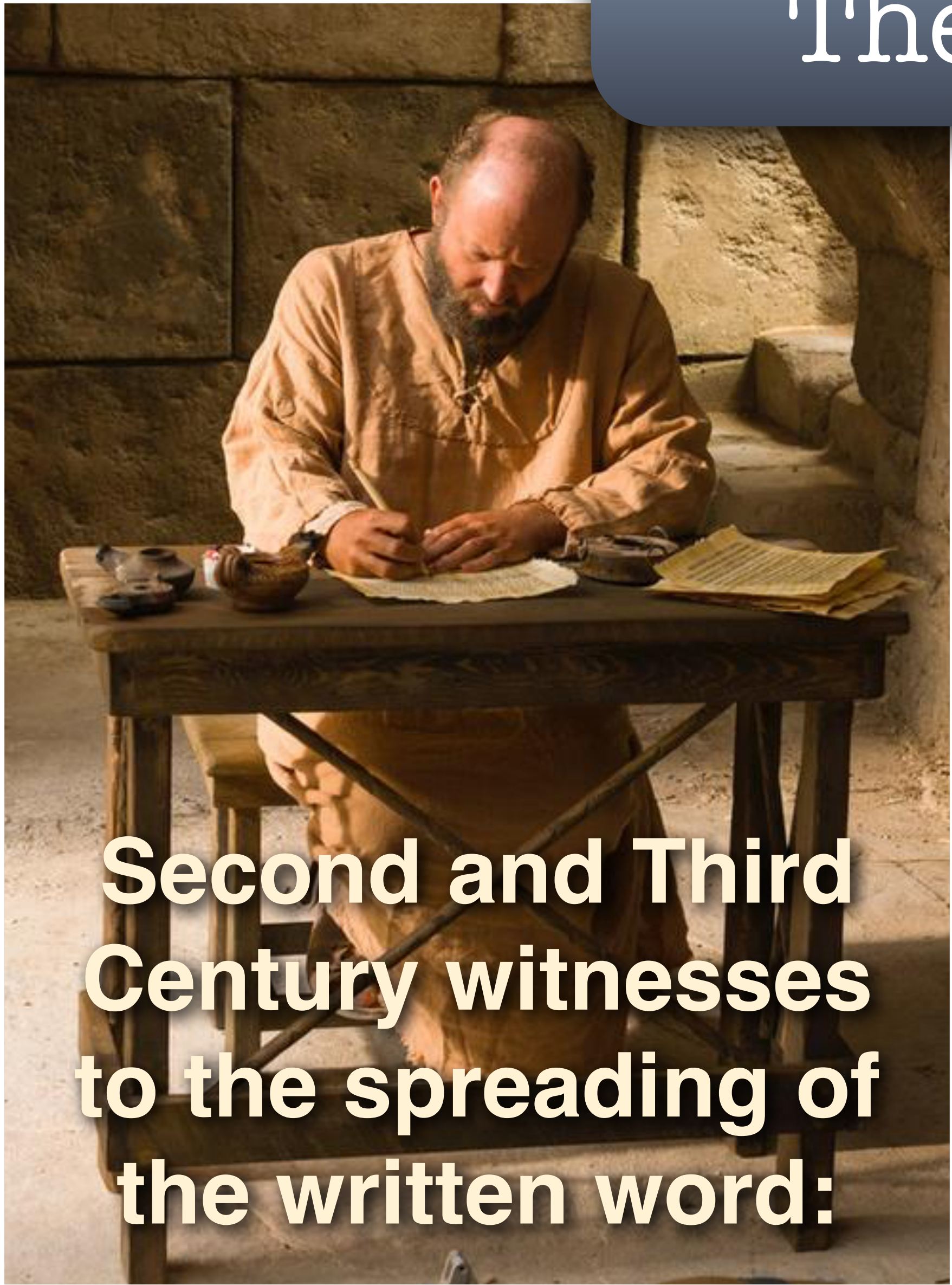


**First and Second
Century witnesses
to the spreading of
the written word:**

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

- Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 140-203)
- Tertullian (ca. A.D. 150-222)
- Clement of Alexander (ca. A.D. 155-215).
- Origen (ca. A.D. 185-254)



Second and Third Century witnesses to the spreading of the written word:

Their testimony shows that the NT books were widely circulated, read, and in general use among churches not long after they were written.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

Date	Event
45-96 A.D.	Books of the New Testament written
2nd century	Codex (modern form factor) of books developed
110 A.D.	Papias refers to the Gospels of Mark & Matthew
125 A.D.	Earliest extant fragment of N.T. (John 18:38)
140 A.D.	Gnostic Marcion attempts first canonical list
150 A.D.	Justin Martyr refers to Christians gathering together and "the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as time permits"

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

Date	Event
160 A.D.	Tatian compiles a "harmony" of the four gospels, called the "Diatessaron"
180 A.D.	Christian prisoners in Scilla, Libya, refer to "the books, and letters of a just man, one Paul" as their defense
200 A.D.	Muratorri Canon compiled
324 A.D.	Constantine becomes undisputed emperor of the Roman Empire

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

Date	Event
325 A.D.	Council of Nicea; Eusebius writes his Church History
332 A.D.	Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea is ordered by Constantine to create 50 volumes "on prepared parchment" of the Holy Scriptures.
325 - 350 A.D.	Codex Vaticanus created; contains the complete New Testament as we have it today.
350 A.D.	Codex Sinaiticus written; (now in the British Museum) contains most of modern day New Testament, plus the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Letter of Barnabas.

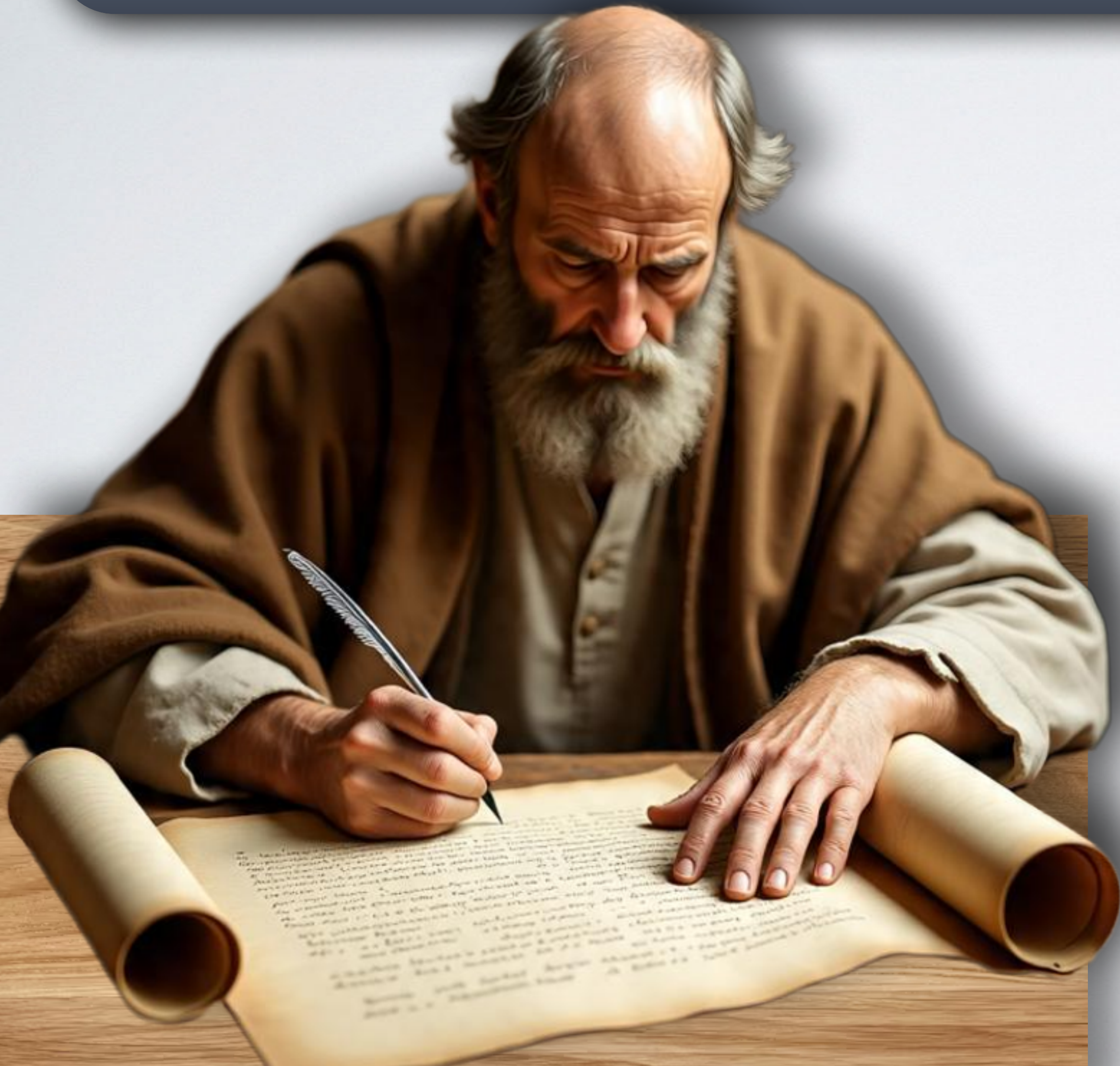
WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

Date	Event
367 A.D.	Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, writes his Paschal letter, listing the modern day New Testament canon
393 A.D.	Council of Hippo affirms modern day canon
397 A.D.	Council of Carthage affirms modern day canon
400 A.D.	Jerome (A.D. 346-420) translates Bible into common Latin (the "Vulgate"), using the list of Athanasius

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

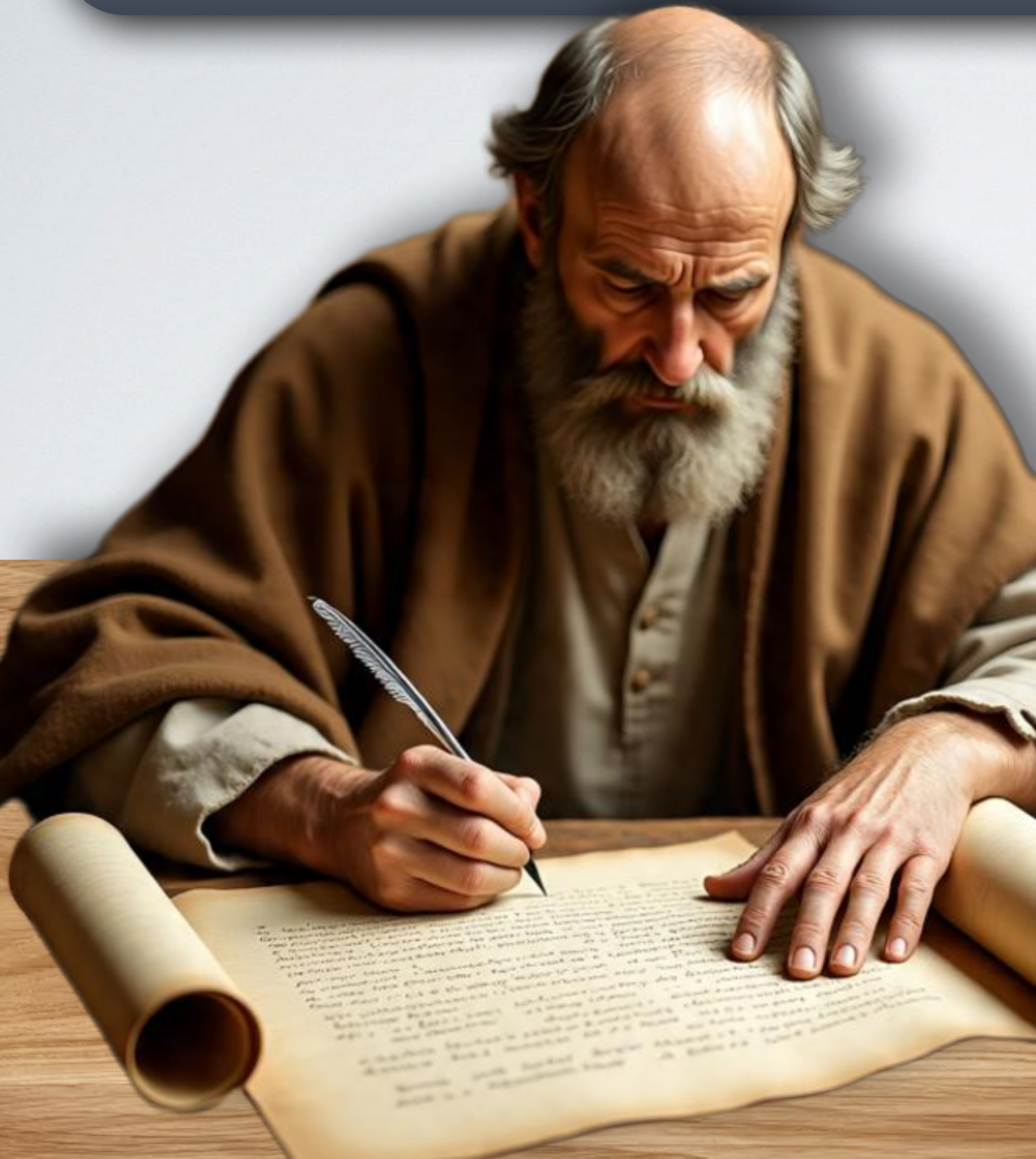
The undisputed core (very widespread by 150–180 AD.)



- ✠ The four Gospels
- ✠ Acts of the Apostles
- ✠ 13 Pauline letters
(Romans–Philemon)
- ✠ 1 Peter
- ✠ 1 John

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The undisputed core (very widespread by 150–180 AD.)



- These books were known, copied, read in worship, and treated as Scripture across major centers (Rome, Asia Minor, Egypt, North Africa, Syria)
- There is widespread evidence they were universally accepted well before any formal list.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The undisputed core (very widespread by 150–180 AD.)



■ Evidence of circulation and authority

- ✠ Justin Martyr (c. 150–160) the “memoirs of the apostles” being read publicly.
- ✠ Irenaeus (c. 180) insists there must be exactly 4 Gospels / cites most of the later New Testament as Scripture.
- ✠ The Muratorian Fragment (commonly dated c. 170–200) lists the 4 Gospels, Acts, thirteen Pauline letters, Jude, two letters of John, and Revelation.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Undisputed Core (universal / scripture / 150–180 AD.)



■ Evidence of circulation and authority

- ✧ Early manuscripts confirm physical circulation:
 - ❖ P52 (John 18), Egypt, c. 125–150
 - ❖ P46 (Pauline letters + Hebrews), Egypt, c. 175–225
 - ❖ P45 (four Gospels + Acts), Egypt, early-to-mid 3rd century

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

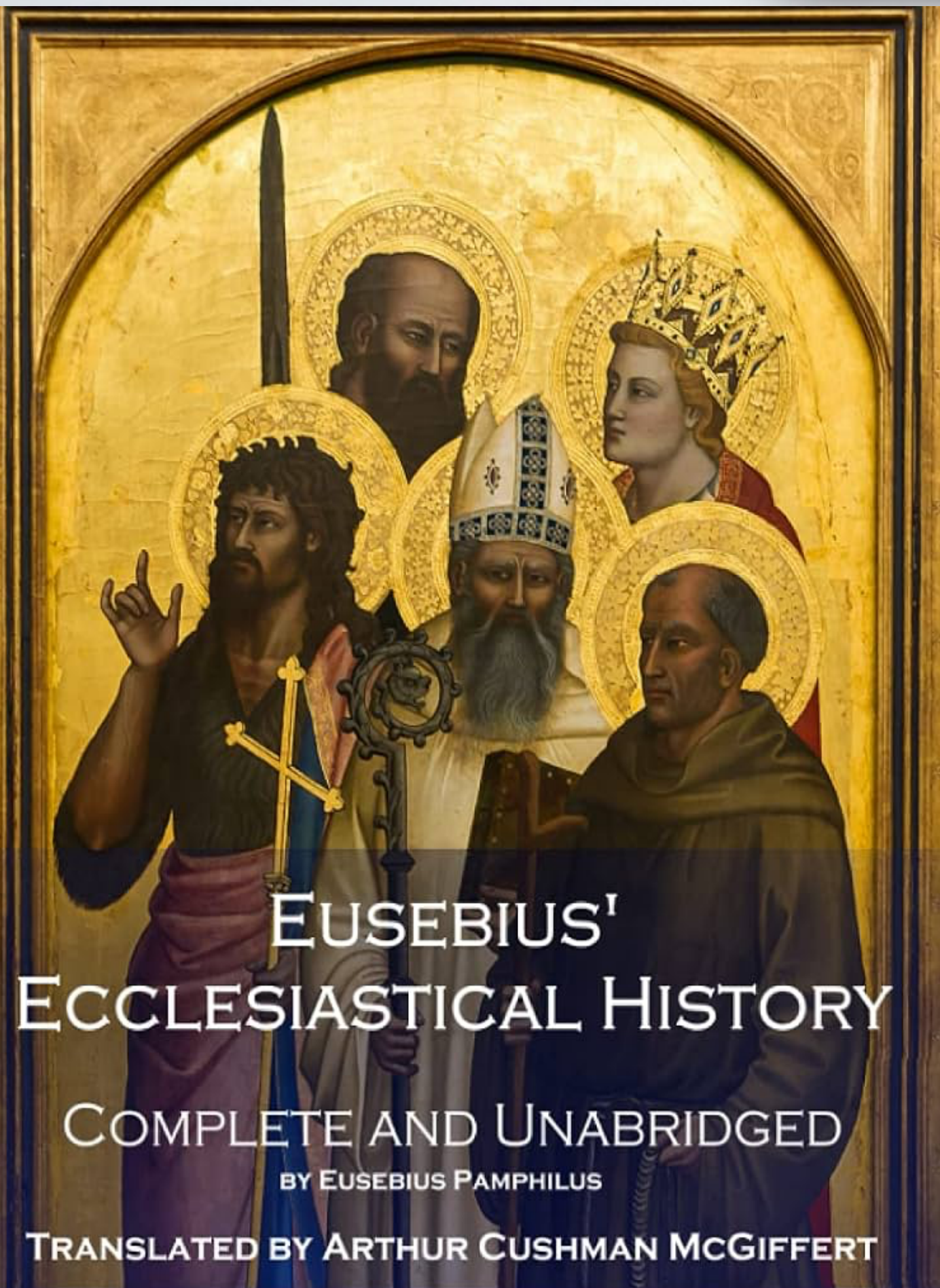
Peripheral Books (known & used but not yet universal)



- **These books were not unknown.**
 - ❖ Origen (early–mid 3rd century) knows and cites all of them, while frankly noting that some churches still question James, 2 Peter, 2–3 John, and (in places) Revelation.
 - ❖ Eusebius (c. 325) classifies them as “disputed, but familiar to the majority.”

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

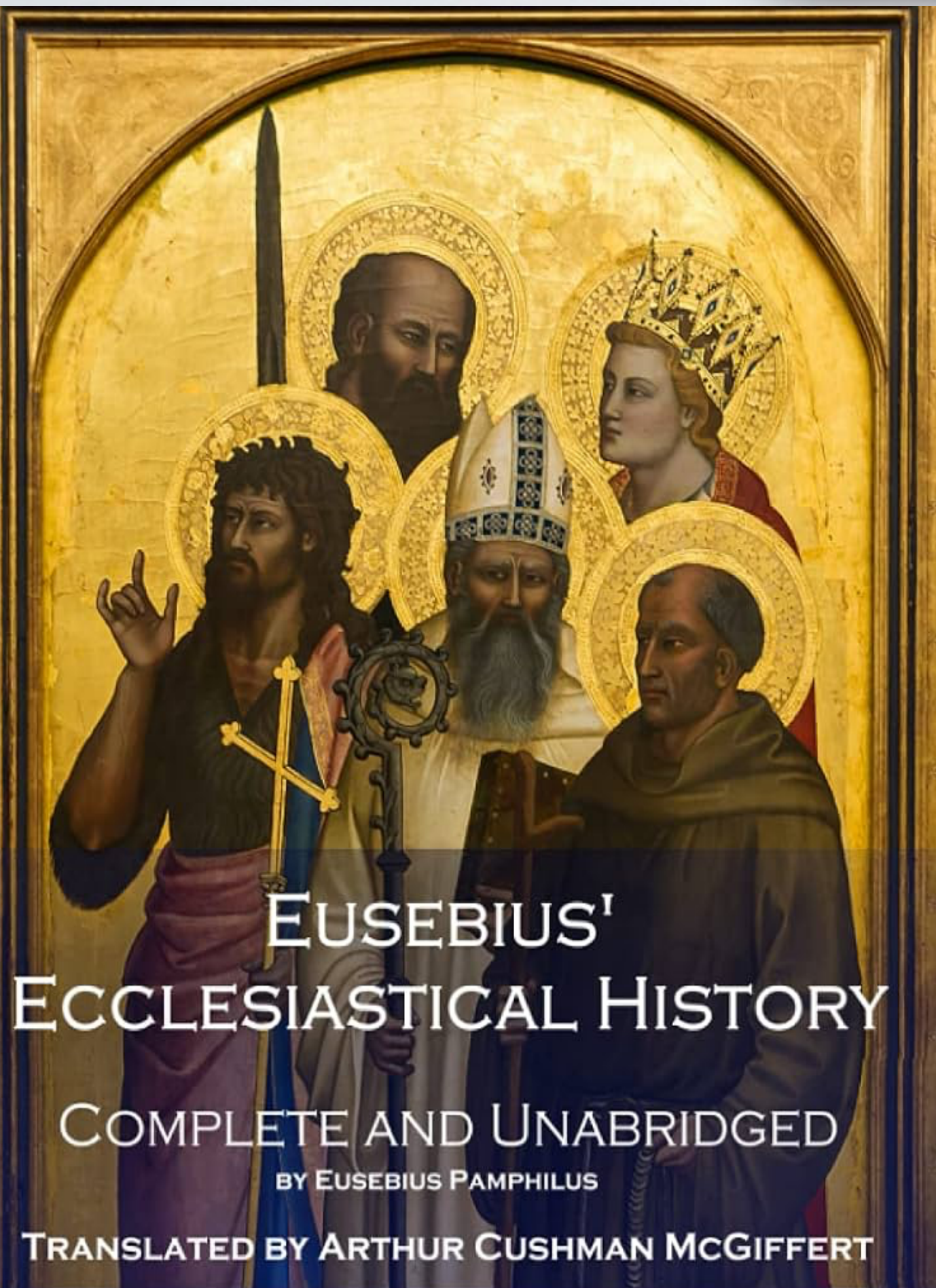
The New Testament Canon



- **Eusebius's categories (Ecclesiastical History 3.25, c. 325)**
 - ⌘ Homologoumena (*universally acknowledged*): 4 Gospels, Acts, Pauline letters, 1 John, 1 Peter; Revelation "if it seem proper."
 - ⌘ Antilegomena (*disputed but known to most*): James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John.
 - ⌘ Spurious / rejected: Shepherd of Hermas, Barnabas, Apocalypse of Peter, Acts of Paul, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, etc.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon



- The antilegomena were never placed in the same category as the heretical or clearly non-apostolic books.
- Churches that accepted them treated them as Scripture; churches that hesitated usually did so because of questions of authorship or limited local attestation, not because of doctrinal deviation.

Figure / Document	Approx. Date	Core Already Authoritative	Peripheral Status	Key Contribution
Clement of Rome	~95	Paul (1 Cor), Jesus' sayings, Hebrews	—	Earliest use of Pauline letter as authoritative
Ignatius	~110	Matthew, John, Paul	—	Dense allusions against heresy
Polycarp	~110–140	Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, Gospels	—	Explicit use of apostolic writings as standard
Papias	~120–140	Mark (via Peter), Matthew	—	Earliest external Gospel origins tradition
Marcion	~140	Edited Luke + 10 Paul	Rejects rest	Forces clearer definition of fuller collection
Justin Martyr	~150	Gospels ("memoirs") read in worship	—	Liturgical use of Gospels as Scripture
Muratorian Fragment	~170–200	4 Gospels, Acts, Paul, Jude, 2 John, Rev	Some edges missing	Earliest surviving annotated list
Theophilus	~180	John named as Scripture, Synoptics, Paul	—	Explicit citation of John 1
Irenaeus	~180	Nearly all 27; exactly 4 Gospels	Few short letters	First strong four-Gospel + broad NT use
Tertullian	~200	4 Gospels, Acts, Paul, 1 Pet, 1 John, Jude, Rev	James, 2 Pet, 2–3 John soft	Western near-complete collection
Clement of Alexandria	~200	Almost all NT books	Still cites extra books	Core fixed; edges still porous
Origen	~230–250	Essentially the full 27	Notes remaining local doubts	Explicit awareness of acknowledged vs. disputed

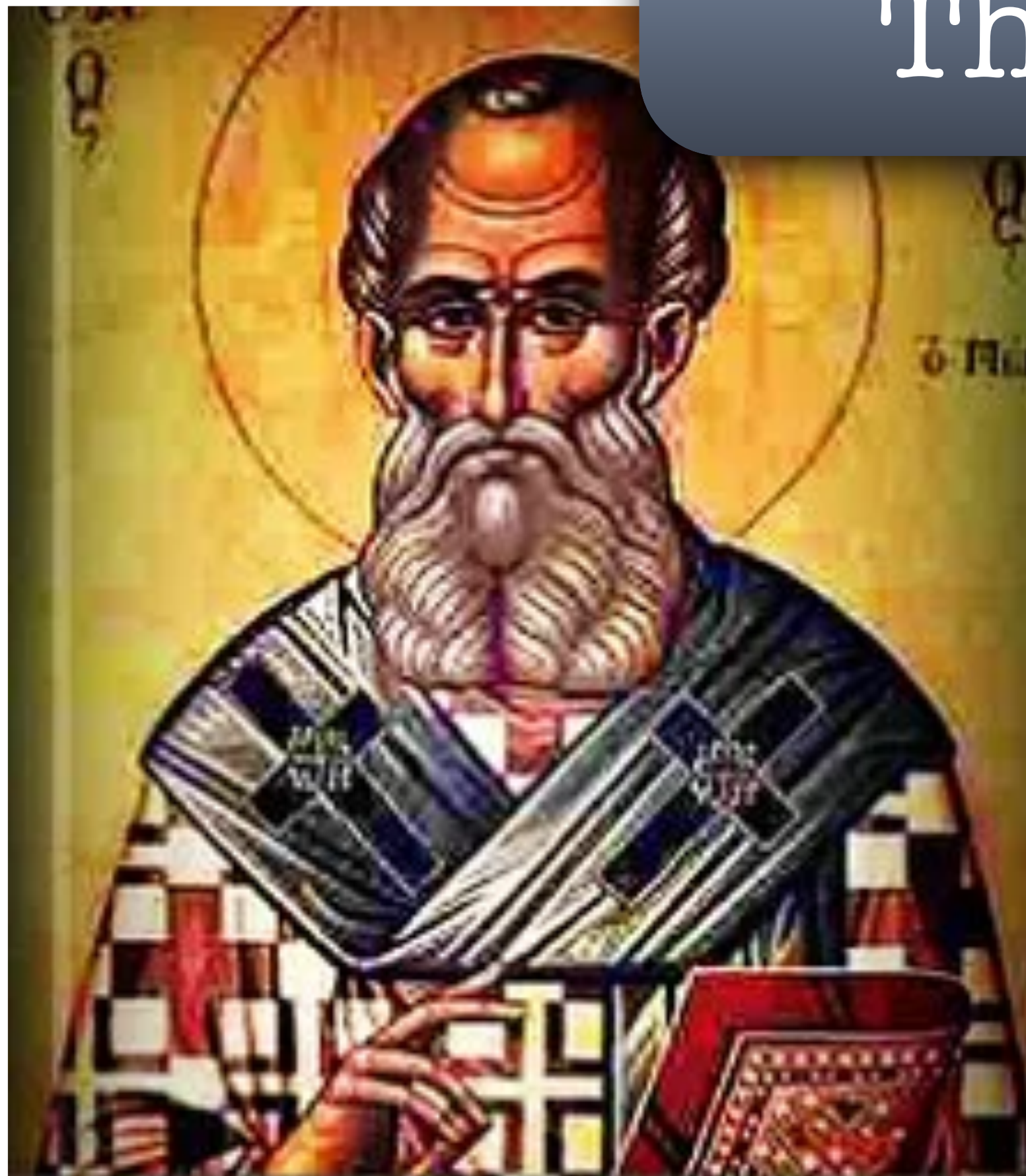
WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The peripheral books (known, but not yet universal)

Book	Main issues	Early reception pattern
Hebrews	Anonymous; style unlike Paul	Accepted early in the East (Alexandria, Syria); slower in the West
James	Limited early citation; perceived tension with Paul	Used in many places; disputed by some
2 Peter	Style differs from 1 Peter; late external attestation	Most weakly attested of the Universal Epistles
2 & 3 John	Very short; limited circulation; authorship questions	Known but not universally cited
Jude	Use of 1 Enoch	Accepted by many (Clement, Tertullian, Origen) but questioned by some
Revelation	Apocalyptic style; chiliastic readings; use by Montanists	Strong in the West early; more resistance in the East

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon



THE FESTAL EPISTLES

By St. Athanasius
Translated by Henry Burgess

- Athanasius, 39th Festal Letter
— First extant list that names exactly today's 27 NT books as “canonized.”
- “In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these.”

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

INCORRECT VIEW

The church is the determiner of the Canon

The church is the mother of the Canon

The church is the magistrate of the canon

The church is the regulator of the canon

The church is the judge of the canon

The church is the master of the canon

CORRECT VIEW

The church is the discoverer of the canon

The church continues via the canon

The church is the minister of the canon.

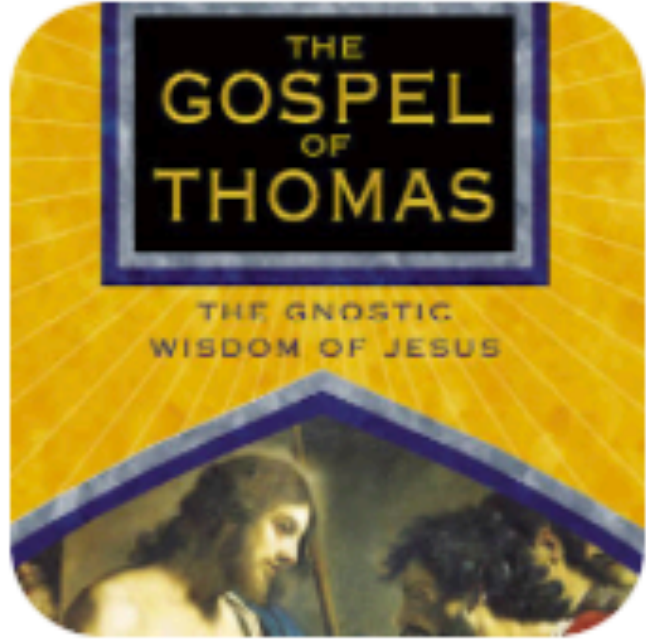
The church is the recognizer of the canon.

The church is the witness of the canon.

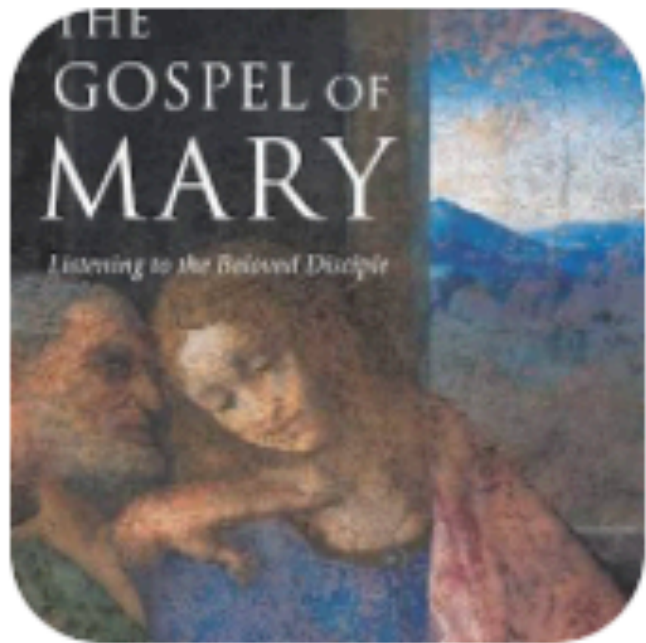
The church is the servant of the canon.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

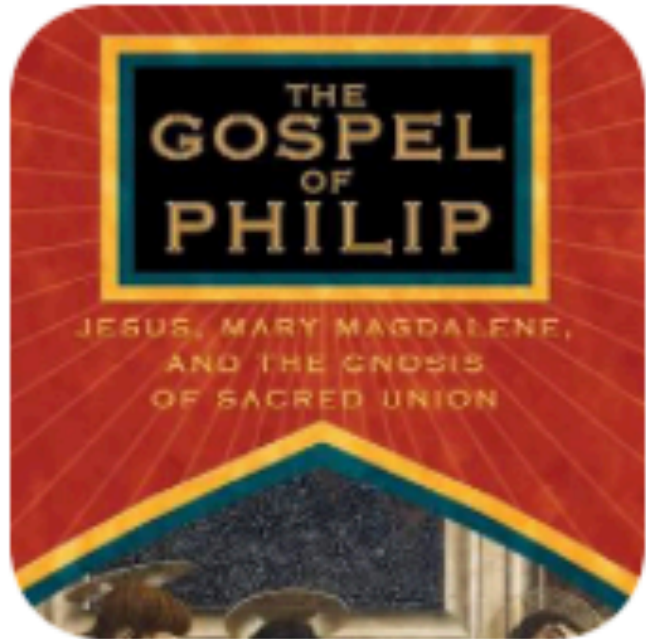
Do NOT



Gospel of Thomas: A highly famous collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus. It completely lacks a narrative timeline or story framework, focusing entirely on inner enlightenment.



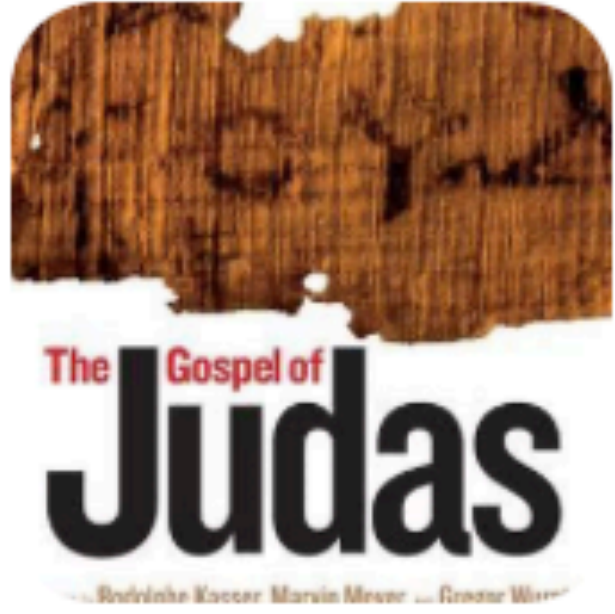
Gospel of Mary (Magdalene): Promotes Mary Magdalene as a premier apostle who received private revelations from Jesus about the soul's ascent past cosmic powers.



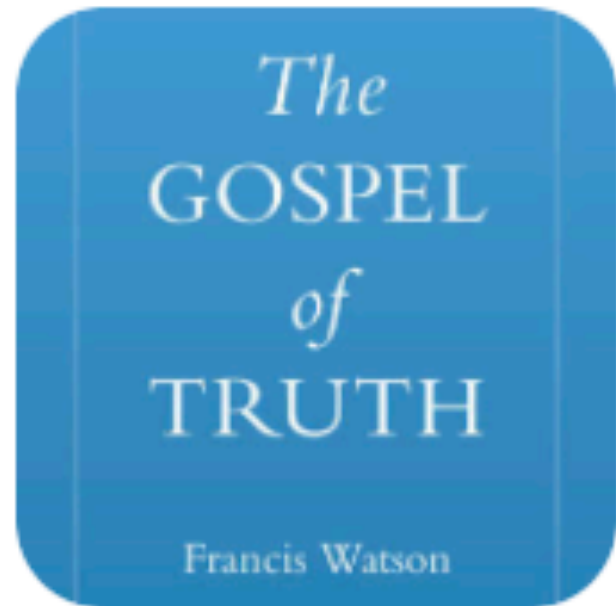
Gospel of Philip: A Valentinian Gnostic text that reflects heavily on sacramental theology, most famous for its discussion of the "bridal chamber" and the close relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Do [^]NOT



Gospel of Judas: A text that subverts the traditional story, depicting Judas Iscariot not as a traitor, but as Jesus' closest friend who betrayed him deliberately under Jesus' own command to release his divine spirit from his physical body.



Gospel of Truth: A deeply poetic homily likely written by the famous Gnostic teacher [Valentinus](#), describing ignorance as a terrifying nightmare and the revelation of Christ as the waking truth.



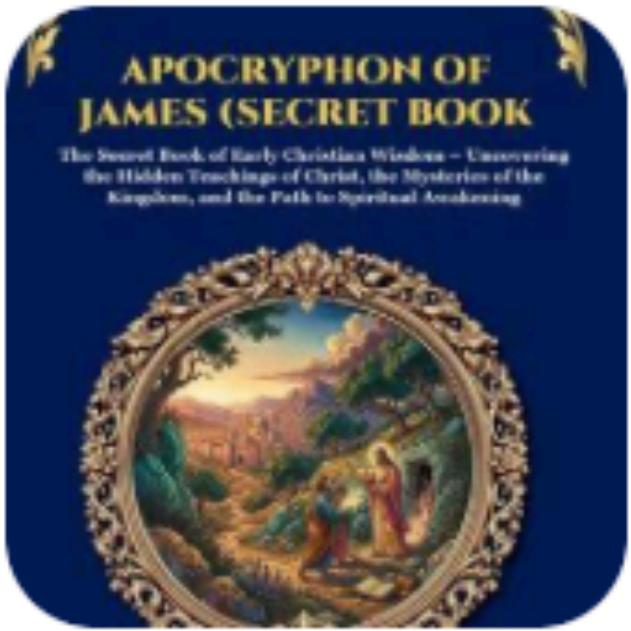
Gospel of the Egyptians: Also known as the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*, this contains Sethian Gnostic cosmology regarding the creation of the universe and the spiritual salvation of Seth's descendants.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

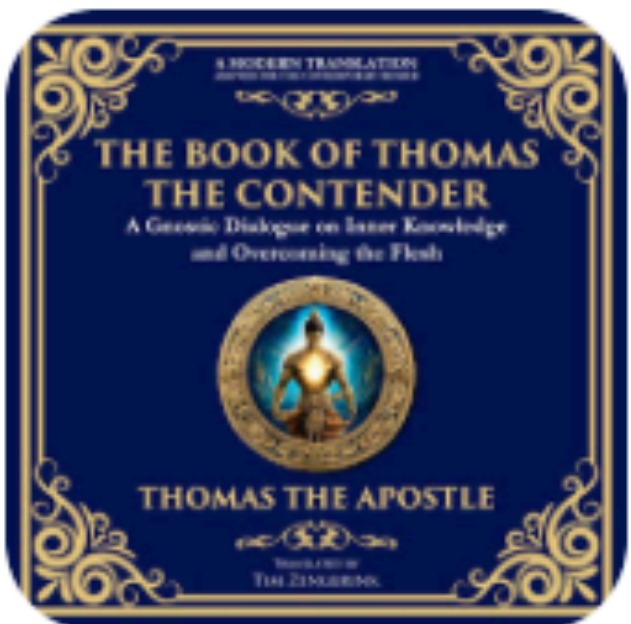
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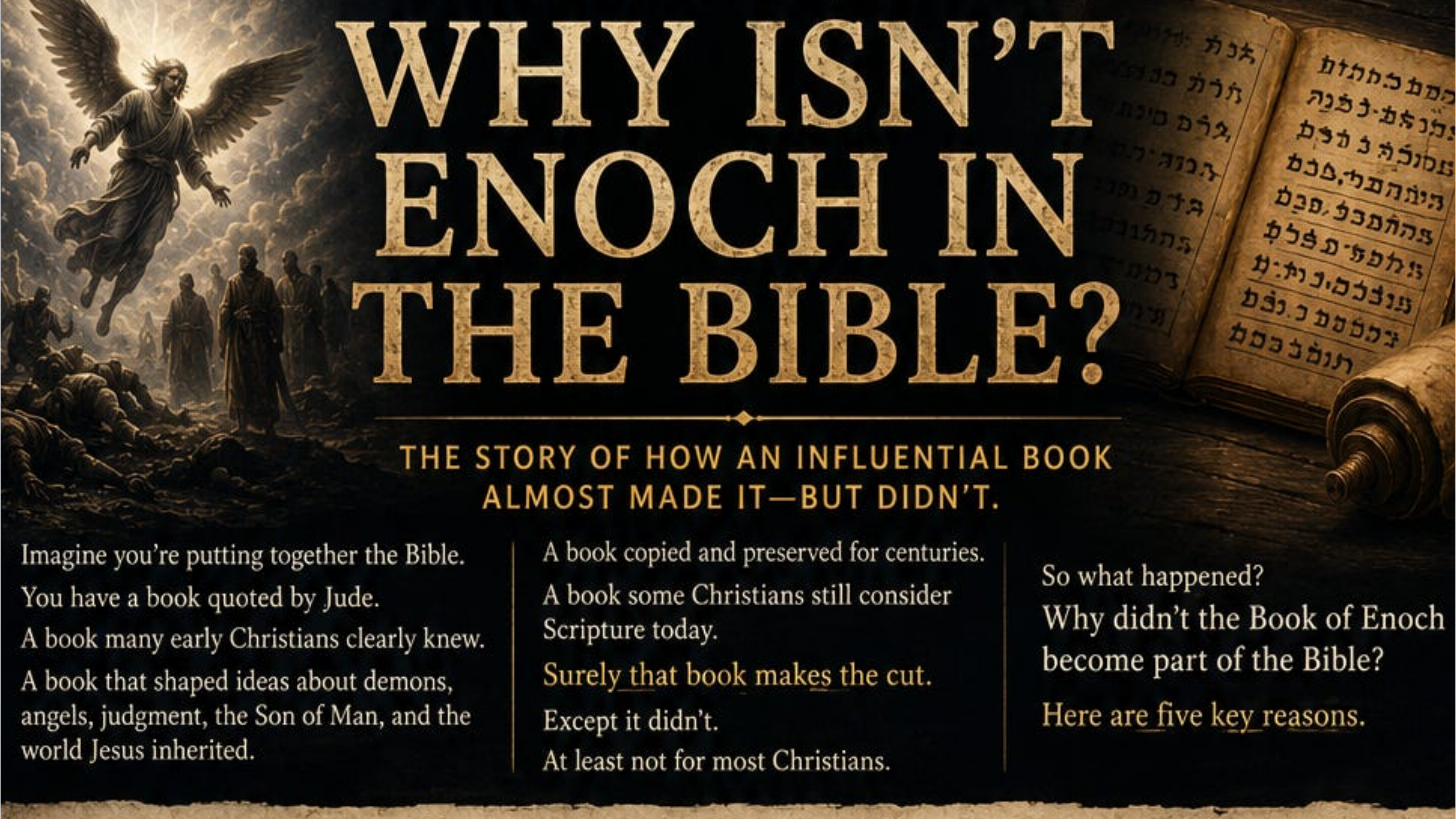
Apocryphon of John (Secret Book of John): Considered the central textbook of Sethian Gnosticism. It traces cosmic history from the true supreme God down to the creation of the physical world by a blind, flawed creator deity ([the Demiurge](#)).



Apocryphon of James (Secret Book of James): A text framing a secret transmission of knowledge written by James to a hidden recipient regarding Jesus' final teachings.



Book of Thomas the Contender: A dialogue between the resurrected Jesus and Judas Thomas (styled as Jesus' twin brother) focusing heavily on asceticism and rejecting physical desires.



WHY ISN'T ENOCH IN THE BIBLE?

THE STORY OF HOW AN INFLUENTIAL BOOK
ALMOST MADE IT—BUT DIDN'T.

Imagine you're putting together the Bible.
You have a book quoted by Jude.
A book many early Christians clearly knew.
A book that shaped ideas about demons,
angels, judgment, the Son of Man, and the
world Jesus inherited.

A book copied and preserved for centuries.
A book some Christians still consider
Scripture today.
Surely that book makes the cut.
Except it didn't.
At least not for most Christians.

So what happened?
Why didn't the Book of Enoch
become part of the Bible?
Here are five key reasons.

1

THERE WAS NEVER ONE BIBLE

In the ancient world, different communities had different collections of sacred books. Jewish canons varied. Christian canons varied. Ethiopian. Catholic. Orthodox. Protestant. There was never a single, universally agreed-upon list. The idea of “the Bible” came much later.



2

ENOCK WAS POPULAR, BUT NOT UNIVERSAL

Many Jews read Enoch and valued it highly. Some early Christians did too.

But popularity doesn't equal canon.

Influence is not the same thing as inspiration.



3

IT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH APOCALYPTIC GROUPS

The Book of Enoch was especially treasured by groups like the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

As Rabbinic Judaism took shape after the destruction of the Temple, many of these apocalyptic traditions were set aside—including Enoch.



4

THE CHURCH LOVED ITS IDEAS MORE THAN THE BOOK

Early Christians absorbed many Enochic ideas: fallen angels, cosmic judgment, the Son of Man, heavenly realms.

Over time, those ideas lived on in sermons, creeds, and theology—even as the book itself faded.



5

ONE CHRISTIAN GROUP NEVER LET IT GO

While most of the church moved on, the Ethiopian Church kept Enoch.

They continued copying it, reading it, and honoring it as Scripture.

In their Bible today, 1 Enoch still stands alongside other inspired books.





WAS ENOCH EVER CONSIDERED FOR CANON?



In the early centuries, some leaders (like Tertullian) argued that Enoch should be accepted.

But many Church Fathers pushed back, saying it was too fantastic, too speculative, or filled with ideas that went beyond what was taught in the churches.

By the 4th century, when major lists of biblical books were taking shape, Enoch was mostly absent from the conversation.

It didn't lose a final vote.

It simply stopped getting invited to the meetings.



Enoch wasn't rejected
in a dramatic showdown.
It faded from the mainstream
over time—while other books
became the foundations of
Christian Scripture.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH ISN'T LOST.
IT ISN'T BANNED.
IT ISN'T HIDDEN.
IT ISN'T A CONSPIRACY.

IT SIMPLY FOLLOWED A
DIFFERENT PATH THROUGH HISTORY.
And in Ethiopia, that path never ended.

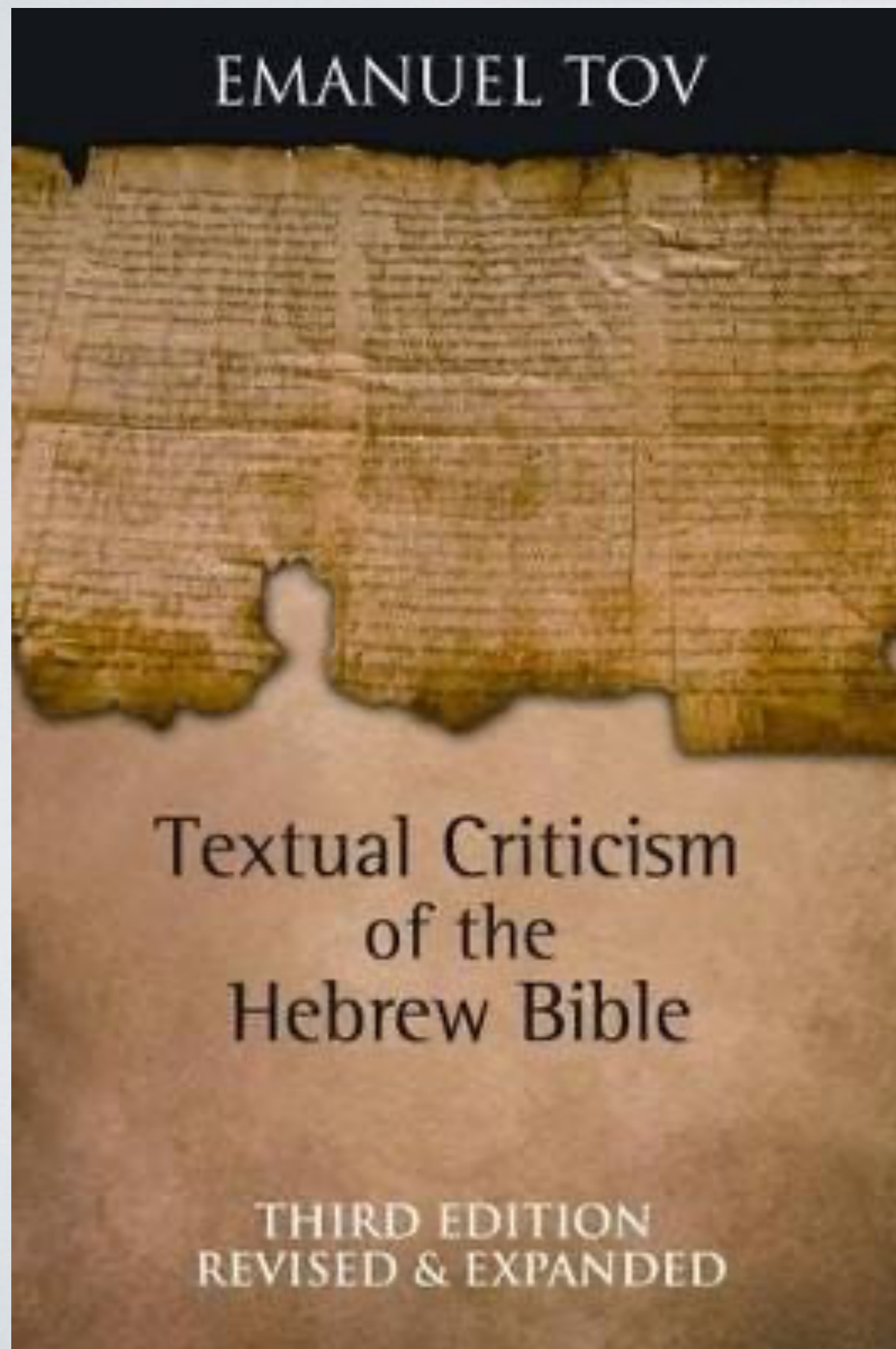


WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

	Catholic Deuterocanon	1 Enoch / Jubilees	Gnostic gospels
Date	300 BC–100 AD	300 BC–100 AD	Mostly 300-400 AD
Home tradition	Greek Jewish / early church liturgy	Qumran + Ethiopia	Sectarian Christian / Gnostic schools
Relation to apostolic faith	Debated; same God, same people	Same God; expanded myth	Often another god, another salvation
Why disputed	Hebrew vs Greek OT	Authorship + Hebrew canon	Authorship + contrary gospel
Use today	Scripture (Catholic/ Orthodox) / edifying intertestamental (Protestant)	Historical / theological background	Historical evidence of later alternatives

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

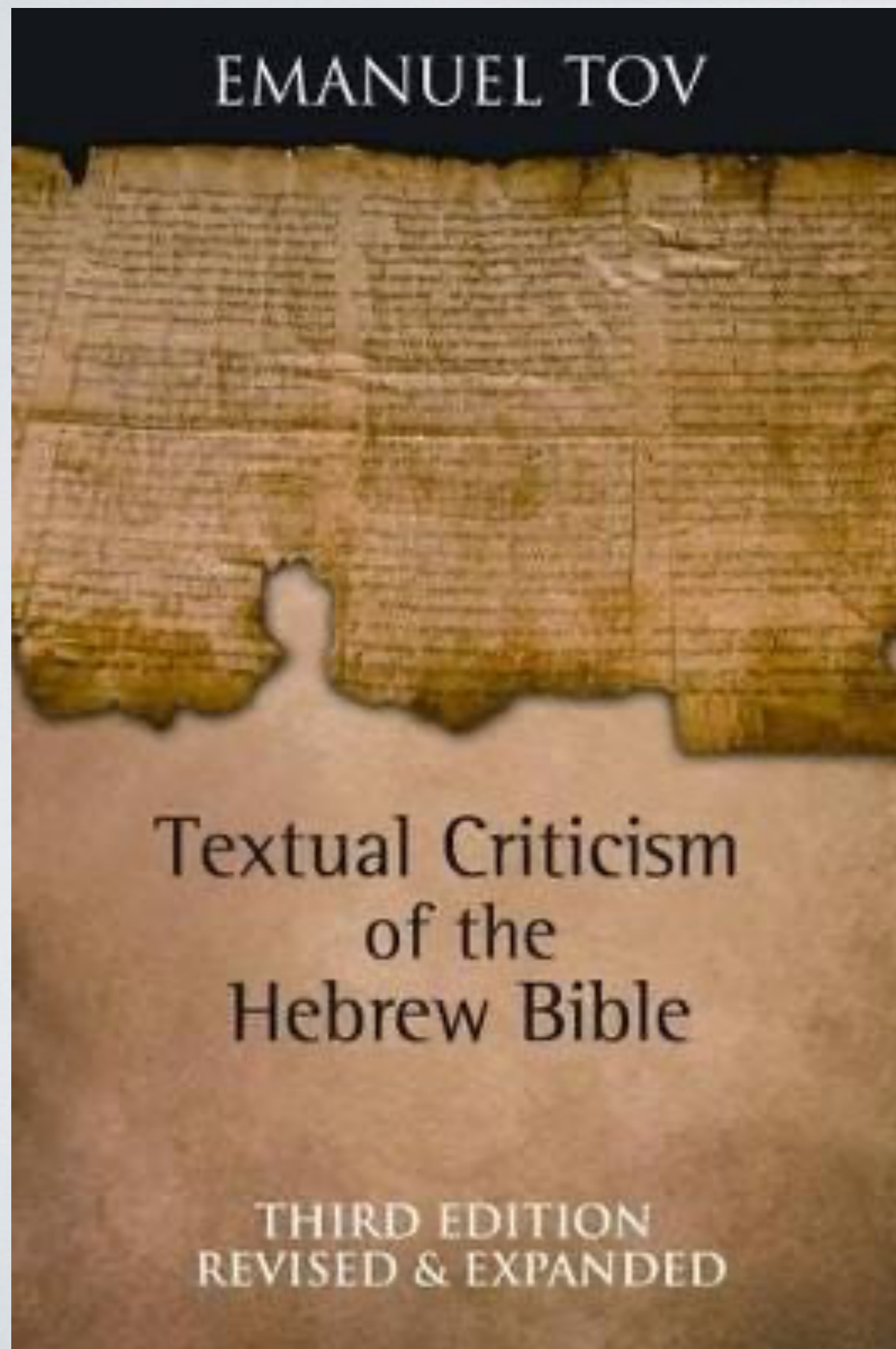
The Criteria For Canonical Books



- An inspired book should reflect the characteristics of God, (omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent) in such ways as fulfilled prophecy and accurate statements with regard to geography, astronomy, science, math, psychology, and all areas of knowledge to the extent that it makes reference to these.
- If God is the Creator of both the world and man, He could not make an inaccurate statement about them.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The Criteria For Canonical Books



- Written by an inspired man.
- For the purpose of instructing the people of God.
- Recognized by the people of God as authoritative at the time.
- Inherent and true.
- Preserved by the providence of God.

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Author	Time Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	Manuscripts
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1000	10
Josephus, War	A.D. 80	A.D. 950	870	9
Plato (Tetralogies)	A.D. 427-347	A.D. 900	1200	7
Tacticus (Annals)	A.D. 100	A.D. 1000	900	1
Pliny the Younger (History)	A.D. 61-113	A.D. 850	750	1
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	A.D. 1000	1400	193
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1500	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1300	200
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1400	49
New Testament	A.D. 45-100	A.D. 125	25-250	5900

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

The New Testament Canon

How does the New Testament compare to other books of antiquity?



The New Testament is
the best attested book
of antiquity by far!
(Matthew 24:35)

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

OLD

TESTAMENT

History

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

Poetry

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Songs of Solomon

Laws of Moses

Prophecy

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

Major Prophets

Minor Prophets

Biography

History

Paul's Letters

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

Romans

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

1 Timothy

2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

(The Gospels)

Other Letters

Prophecy

Hebrews

James

1 Peter

2 Peter

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jude

Revelation

NEW

TESTAMENT

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS WORDS



Matthew 24:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass
away, but My words will by no
means pass away.



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS WORDS



1 Peter 1:23–25 (NKJV)

.... “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man
as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And
its flower falls away, ²⁵ But the word of the Lord
endures forever.” Now this is the word which by
the gospel was preached to you.



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS WORDS



Romans 15:4 (NKJV)

⁴ For whatever things were written
before were written for our learning, that
we through the patience and comfort of
the Scriptures might have hope.



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS WORDS



Do you accept the Bible as God's
word & tremble (Isaiah 66:2)



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS WORDS



God's word will judge us -
Are You Ready? (John 12:48)



WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

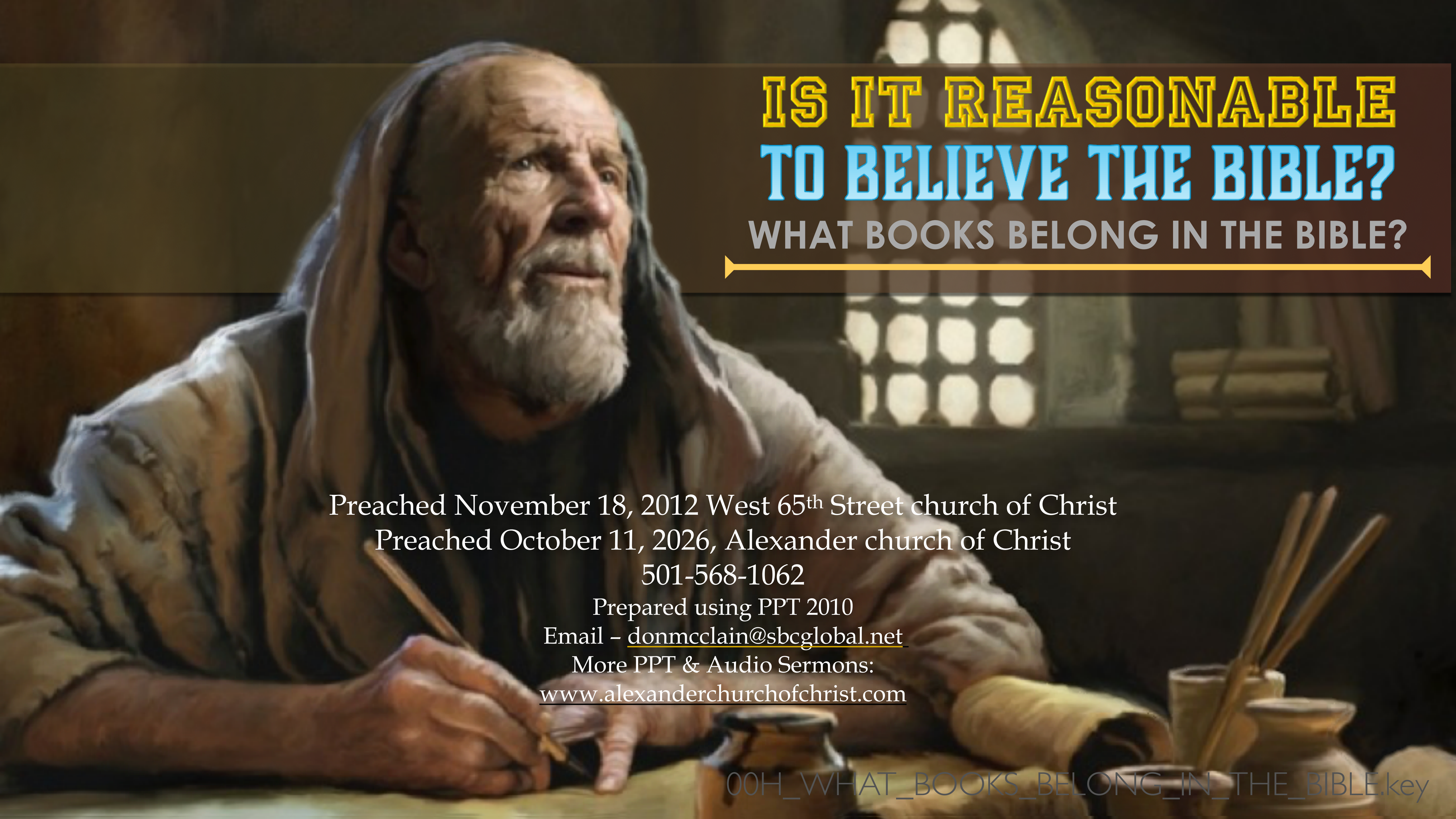
GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS WORDS



- 👁️ HEAR (Rom 10:17)
- 👁️ BELIEVE (Jn 8:24)
- 👁️ CONFESS (Rom. 10:9,10)
- 👁️ REPENT (Acts 17:30)
- 👁️ BE BAPTIZED (Acts 22:16)
- 👁️ WALK IN TRUTH (1 Jn. 1:7-9; 2 Jn 4)

**DO YOU
BELIEVE
THE BIBLE?**





IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

WHAT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

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Preached October 11, 2026, Alexander church of Christ

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