

4. Within the Old Testament and New Testament, there is evidence of a growing **COLLECTION** of books recognized as inspired by God.

Old Testament:

New Testament:

5. The New Testament authors believed they were writing **SCRIPTURE**.

(Lk 1:1-4, 1 Cor. 14:37-38, 1 Thes. 2:13, 2 Pt 1:16-21, 3:1-3, 3:14-17)

6. The New Testament writings are the **EARLIEST** Christian writings and the **ONLY** Christian writings we have from the first century.

7. Early Church Fathers immediately began quoting the New Testament as **AUTHORITATIVE SCRIPTURE**.

8. Early Church Fathers eventually began to compile and debate **LISTS** of inspired books.

- Why no earlier lists?
- Muratorian fragment (170 AD): lists 22 of 27 NT books
- Origen's list (250 AD): all 27 books
- Some books were debated by some people.

---

*Sola Scriptura is the conviction that only the Bible—because it is God's inspired, inerrant Word—is our SUFFICIENT and FINAL authority. But are we confident that the Bible is inspired by God and without error? Today we continue to explore the reliability of Scripture by asking the question, "Why THESE books of the Bible?"*

1. **"CANON"** is another word for the collection of inspired books of the Bible.
2. No individual or church council **CREATED** or **DECIDED** the list of inspired books. Rather, books inspired by God were **DISCOVERED** and **RECOGNIZED** over time by God's people as they were written and collected.
3. There was informal **CRITERIA** used by the people of God along the way to recognize inspired and canonical books.
  - Is the book **AUTHORITATIVE**? Was it written by a recognized prophet, apostle or man of God?
  - Is the book **INSPIRED**? Does it claim to be God's Word?
  - Is the book **ORTHODOX**? Does it agree with previously recognized Scripture?
  - Is the book **ACCEPTED**? Was it received as God's Word by God's people for whom it was originally intended?

## Why THESE Books of the Bible?

Various Scriptures

February 4, 2018

Growth Group Week 4 of 9

---

*Growth Groups are the glue that hold our church together. Growth Groups are groups of 6 - 12+ people that meet together during the week to process and apply the message, pray together, care for another and live life together. If you are interested in joining a Growth Group, go to [gracecentralcoast.org](http://gracecentralcoast.org).*

### Living Life Together

Take time in this 4th week of Winter Growth Groups to connect with one another. Share life's joys and struggles.

### Digging Into God's Word & the Message Together

1. What is one thing you learned in this week's message? What is one way you were challenged by the message?
2. Different people experience different struggles with the reliability of the Bible. Has the area of canon been a struggle for you? Have you wondered why THESE books and not others?
3. Read 1 Cor. 14:37-38, 1 Thes. 2:13, 2 Pt 1:16-21, 3:1-3, 3:14-17. What do all these passages have in common and what do they claim?

4. Break up into pairs and use the message outline to answer these objections related to the canon of Scripture . . .
  - *The New Testament authors didn't even think they were writing Scripture.*
  - *The books of the New Testament weren't even chosen or decided until the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.*
  - *Early Christians disagreed widely about which books should be included in the Bible.*
  - *There were lots of other writings that could have been included in the Bible. What makes THESE books special?*
5. Do you feel like you are more ready to have a conversation with someone about the canon-related questions? If not, what are you going to do about that?

### Praying Together

- Using 1 Peter 3:15 as a springboard, pray for a deepening of your commitment to Scripture and an equipping to be able to talk about Scripture.
- Pray that our young people at Grace will work through their own questions about the Bible and come to embrace its authority.
- Share and pray for one another's needs and life challenges.