

How did the Early Church decide on the 27 NT books?

When the early church sought to determine which letters were to be considered scripture and which were not they had four criteria:

1. **Authorship**: Did an Apostle, and eye witness pen the letter, or did the author get his information directly from an Apostle?
2. **Antiquity**: when was the letter written?
3. **Orthodoxy**: Do these documents affirm the OT and the testimony that people had heard directly from the Apostles?
4. **Universality**: No letter was considered to be authentic, unless it was accepted by many churches in different areas.

These were the determining factors for the early church when they determined which books would be part of the biblical canon (which is a Greek word that means measuring rod).

How can we be sure that the words we have are the ORIGINAL words written?

The term manuscript refers to any hand-written copy of an ancient document that predates the invention of the printing press in 1455.

How many manuscripts of the Bible do we have?

Manuscript Count

Greek NT manuscripts: **5,800** W/Latin manuscripts: **OVER 8,000**

Both OT and NT manuscripts: more than **25,000**

Early Church Fathers citations of the Bible: **86,000**

It is important to note that there is **NOT** one major doctrine of Christianity that rests on any disputed or uncertain passage of scripture.

-Other means of confidence in the Bible-

1. FULFILLED PROPHECY

Probability that these 8 prophecies would be fulfilled accidentally by one person is 1 in one **HUNDRED QUADRILLION** (100,000,000,000,000)

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE