

UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Abstract

This research article delves into the origins and history of the New Testament of Christianity. The article explores the historical, cultural, and religious contexts in which the books included in the New Testament were written and compiled. It describes the evolution of these texts, including their different versions and translations, and the contributions of Christian Religious scholars in interpreting the Texts. The study draws from the works of various scholars and experts in biblical studies and presents a comprehensive overview of the Bible's history and evolution.

Keywords – New Testament, Bible, Christianity, Christian Scriptures, Religious History

Introduction

The books of Christianity are called Bible, which is divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is composed of 39 books, which were written before the birth of Jesus Christ (Isa - عليه السلام), while the New Testament consists of 27 books, which were written after his death and resurrection (as per Christian belief).

The New Testament is a collection of books that form the second part of the Christian Bible and is considered sacred scripture by Christians worldwide. It contains 27 individual books that were written over a span of approximately 50-75 years, from around 50 - 125 AD. These books include four Gospels, which provide accounts of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Isa - عليه السلام), as well as letters, or epistles, written by various authors to different churches and individuals. They were written as theological documents in the context of early Christianity rather than historical chronicles. The New Testament also includes the book of Acts, which chronicles the early history of the Christian

church, and the book of Revelation, which offers apocalyptic imagery and prophesies about the end of the world. These books have played a significant role in shaping Christian beliefs, practices, and cultural traditions.

The structure, authors, and themes of the New Testament

The New Testament is a compilation of 27 books written by different authors spanning across one and half century after the death of Jesus Christ (Isa - عليه السلام). We shall explore each book in terms of their author(s), approximate date in which the book was written, the audience for whom each book was initially intended, and the major themes discussed within each book.

1. Matthew

- **Author:** Traditionally attributed to the apostle Matthew, although most of the modern biblical scholars are sceptical about it.
- **Date:** Written between 70-100 AD.
- **Audience:** Primarily written for a Jewish Christian audience, but also intended for a wider audience of Gentile (non-Jew) believers.
- **Theme:** The identity of Jesus as the Son of God, emphasizing his teachings on the kingdom of God (the spiritual realm over which God reigns as king) and ethics of discipleship, his miracles and healings, his authority and suffering, and the importance of faith in him for salvation,

and spreading the gospel [the teaching and life of Jesus Christ (Isa - عليه السلام)].

2. Mark

- *Author:* Traditionally attributed to John Mark, a companion of the apostle (saint) Peter.
- *Date:* Written around 65-70 AD.
- *Audience:* Written for a primarily Gentile (non-Jew) audience, possibly in Rome or Syria.
- *Theme:* The identity of Jesus as the Son of God, emphasizing his actions and miracles more than his teachings.

3. Luke

- *Author:* Written by Luke, a Gentile (non-Jew) physician and companion of the apostle (saint) Paul.
- *Date:* Written between 70-90 AD.
- *Audience:* Written primarily for Gentile audience, possibly in Greece or Asia Minor.
- *Theme:* The identity of Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, emphasizing his compassion for the marginalized, and his ministry to the poor, the sick, and the outcasts.

4. John

- *Author:* Traditionally attributed to the apostle John, although the actual authorship is debated among scholars.
- *Date:* Written between 90-100 AD.
- *Audience:* Written for a mixed audience of Jewish and Gentile believers, possibly in Ephesus or another city in Asia Minor.
- *Theme:* The identity of Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, emphasizing his divine nature and his role in creation, as well as his teachings on eternal life and the nature of God.

5. Acts

- *Author:* Written by Luke, a Gentile physician and companion of the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written between 70-90 AD, likely after the Gospel of Luke.
- *Audience:* Written for the same audience as the Gospel of Luke, possibly in Greece or Asia Minor.
- *Theme:* The growth and spread of the early Christian church, from the ascension of Jesus (Isa - عليه السلام) to the imprisonment of the apostle Paul.

6. Romans

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul, although some scholars debate the authorship of certain portions of the book.
- *Date:* Written between 55-57 AD, while Paul was in Corinth (Greek city) on his third missionary journey.
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Rome, which included both Jewish and Gentile believers.
- *Theme:* The gospel (the teachings and life) of Jesus Christ (Isa - عليه السلام) as the power of God for salvation, and the righteousness of God revealed through faith in Jesus Christ (Isa - عليه السلام).

7. 1 Corinthians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written between 53-54 AD, during Paul's stay in Ephesus (Turkey).
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Corinth, which was a diverse and cosmopolitan city of mixed Jewish and Gentile believers.
- *Theme:* The unity of the church and the importance of living a life of holiness and love in the midst of a corrupt and immoral culture.

8. 2 Corinthians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 55-56 AD, likely shortly after 1 Corinthians (the epistle attributed to Paul the Apostle, and a co-author, Sosthenes).
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Corinth, which was experiencing internal conflict and opposition.
- *Theme:* The defence of Paul's apostolic authority and the importance of true Christian ministry. The book of 2 Corinthians contains a number of personal and emotional reflections from Paul, as he responds to criticisms of his ministry and defends his authority as an apostle.

9. Galatians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 49-50 AD, likely before the Jerusalem Council.
- *Audience:* Written to the churches in Galatia (Turkey), which were primarily Gentile in composition.
- *Theme:* The gospel of grace and freedom in Christ. The book of Galatians emphasizes the central importance of the gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and not through obedience to the Jewish law or any other works-based system.

10. Ephesians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 60-62 AD, likely during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Ephesus (Turkey), and possibly intended for other churches as well in the region.

- *Theme:* The unity of the church in Christ and the spiritual blessings that believers have in him.

11. Philippians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 61-62 AD, likely during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Philippi (Greece), which Paul had founded on his second missionary journey.
- *Theme:* The joy and contentment that come from living in the following of Christ, and the importance of unity and humility in the church.

12. Colossians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 60-62 AD, likely during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Colossae (Turkey), that Paul had not personally visited. The letter is also addressed to the neighbouring churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- *Theme:* The supremacy and sufficiency of Christ, and the danger of other teachings that threatened the church.

13. 1 Thessalonians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul, along with Silas and Timothy.
- *Date:* Written around 50-51 AD, during Paul's second missionary journey.
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Thessalonica, a city in Macedonia (Greece) that Paul had founded during his missionary travels.
- *Theme:* The coming of the Lord and the hope of the resurrection. The book of 1 Thessalonians (first epistle of

Thessalonians) is one of the earliest letters written by Paul that contains a pastoral message of encouragement and exhortation to the followers in Thessalonica (Greece).

14. 2 Thessalonians

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul, along with Silas and Timothy.
- *Date:* Written around 51-52 AD, shortly after the writing of 1 Thessalonians.
- *Audience:* Written to the church in Thessalonica (Greece), that Paul had founded during his missionary travels.
- *Theme:* The second coming of Christ and the need for perseverance in the face of persecution. The book of 2 Thessalonians builds upon the themes of the first letter, with a focus on the return of Christ and the need for the followers to be prepared for his coming.

15. 1 Timothy

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 62-64 AD, during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
- *Audience:* Written to Timothy, whom Paul had appointed as an overseer or bishop. The letter is also addressed to the church in Ephesus (Turkey) in a broader sense.
- *Theme:* Instructions for church leadership and the importance of sound doctrine.

16. 2 Timothy

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 66-67 AD, near the end of Paul's life and during his second imprisonment in Rome.
- *Audience:* Written to Timothy, whom Paul had appointed as an overseer or bishop. The letter is also addressed to the church in a broader sense.

- *Theme:* Encouragement and exhortation for Timothy to continue in his ministry and to remain faithful to the gospel. Paul's letter to Timothy reflects a sense of urgency, as he recognizes that his own life is coming to an end and he wants to pass on his final words of encouragement to Timothy.

17. Titus

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 63-66 AD, during Paul's travels in the Mediterranean region.
- *Audience:* Written to Titus, a Greek convert whom Paul had left on the island of Crete to organize the churches there. The letter is also addressed to the church more broadly.
- *Theme:* Instructions for church leaders and members on how to live as per the gospel in their daily lives.

18. Philemon

- *Author:* Written by the apostle Paul.
- *Date:* Written around 60-62 AD, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
- *Audience:* Written to Philemon, a wealthy Christian who lived in Colossae, and the church that met in his home.
- *Theme:* A personal letter from Paul to Philemon, in which he urges Philemon to receive back his runaway slave, Onesimus, not as a slave but as a brother.

19. Hebrews

- *Author:* The authorship of Hebrews is unknown. Although traditionally attributed to the apostle Paul, the writing style and theology differ significantly from his other letters, leading many scholars to propose other possible authors,

including Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, or Priscilla and Aquila.

- *Date:* The exact date of composition is uncertain, but most scholars date it between 64-95 AD, likely before the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD.
- *Audience:* The original audience of Hebrews is unknown, but it is generally believed to have been written to a group of Jewish Christians who were facing persecution and struggling with doubts about their faith.
- *Theme:* Hebrews is a powerful theological treatise that emphasizes the supremacy of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the perfect High Priest who offered himself as a sacrifice for sin. The author argues that Jesus is superior to the prophets, angels, Moses, and the Levitical priesthood, and that his once-for-all sacrifice has replaced the need for continual animal sacrifices.

20. James

- *Author:* The author of James is traditionally identified as James, the brother of Jesus, who was a leader in the Jerusalem church. However, some scholars dispute this attribution, suggesting that the letter may have been written by a different James, such as James the son of Zebedee or James the father of Judas.
- *Date:* The exact date of composition is uncertain, but most scholars date it between 45-49 AD, making it one of the earliest New Testament writings.
- *Audience:* James is addressed to Jewish Christians who were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, likely as a result of persecution or economic hardship.

- *Theme:* James is an ethical exhortation to live one's life in virtue. The author emphasizes the importance of good works and the need to live a life of obedience to God's commandments, rather than just relying on intellectual assent to the truth.

21. 1 Peter

- *Author:* Apostle Peter
- *Date:* Most likely written between AD 60-64
- *Audience:* Christians living in various regions of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey)
- *Theme:* Encouragement and instruction for Christians facing persecution, emphasizing the hope and salvation found in Jesus Christ. The letter also touches on various topics such as submission to authority and suffering for doing good.

22. 2 Peter

- *Author:* Apostle Peter
- *Date:* Most likely written between AD 65-68 (after the writing of 1 Peter)
- *Audience:* Christians in various regions facing variety of teachings and moral corruption.
- *Theme:* Emphasizing the importance of correct knowledge and warning against unethical teachers, 2 Peter encourages Christians to grow in Christian faith, knowledge, and godliness. It also highlights the certainty of Christ's return and the importance of living a life in anticipation of his coming.

23. 1 John

- *Author:* Apostle John, son of Zebedee

- *Date:* Most likely written between AD 85-95
- *Audience:* Christians in various regions facing diverse teachings and moral corruption
- *Theme:* The book of 1 John emphasizes the importance of love, both in terms of God's love for humanity and Christians' love for one another.

24. 2 John

- *Author:* The author of 2 John is traditionally identified as John the Apostle, who also wrote the Gospel of John and 1 John.
- *Date:* The date of composition is uncertain, but it is generally believed to have been written between 90-100 AD.
- *Audience:* 2 John is addressed to "the chosen lady and her children," although the exact identity of this individual or group is not known. Some scholars suggest that the "chosen lady" may be a metaphor for a particular church or community of believers.
- *Theme:* The primary theme of 2 John is the importance of love and obedience in the Christian community. The author encourages his readers to walk in Christian truth and to avoid unidentified teachers who deny that Jesus Christ came in human flesh in his first coming. He who abides in this doctrine has both the Father and the Son.

25. 3 John

- *Author:* John the Apostle (traditionally)
- *Date:* 90s AD
- *Audience:* Gaius and the church
- *Theme:* The book is a personal letter from John to Gaius (his disciple),

commending him for his hospitality to traveling missionaries and encouraging him to continue to support them. John also condemns the behaviour of a man named Diotrephes, who had been acting selfishly and maliciously toward the traveling missionaries and other members of the church.

26. Jude

- *Author:* Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.
- *Date:* Most scholars believe that the book of Jude was written in the late 1st century AD, possibly between 70-90 AD.
- *Audience:* The letter is addressed to "those who are called, beloved in God, the Father and kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:1), which is a general audience, likely a group of Christians in various locations.
- *Theme:* The book of Jude is a short and emphatic letter that warns against untruthful teachers and encourages Christians to contend for the faith.

27. Revelation

- *Author:* Traditionally attributed to John the Apostle, although the authorship is debated.
- *Date:* Likely written around 95 AD during the reign of Emperor Domitian.
- *Audience:* The seven churches in Asia Minor (Turkey).
- *Theme:* Revelation is an apocalyptic work that presents a vision of the end of the world and the ultimate triumph of God over evil. The book is highly symbolic, using vivid imagery and complex numerology to describe the cosmic battle between good and evil.

A brief overview of the authors of the books within the New Testament

1. *Matthew*: According to tradition, Matthew was a tax collector before he became a disciple of Jesus. He is believed to have written his gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic, which was later translated into Greek.
2. *Mark*: Mark is traditionally identified as John Mark, a companion of apostle Peter. He is believed to have written his gospel in Rome, based on the teachings of Peter.
3. *Luke*: Luke was a physician and companion of apostle Paul. He is believed to have written his gospel and the book of Acts, and was likely a Gentile convert to Christianity.
4. *John*: John was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, and the author of the Gospel of John, three letters (1 John, 2 John, 3 John), and the book of Revelation. He is traditionally believed to have been the last surviving apostle.
5. *Paul*: Paul was a Jewish Pharisee and a zealous persecutor of Christians before his conversion to Christianity. He went on to become one of the most important figures in the early Christian church, and wrote several letters to various churches, which are now part of the New Testament.
6. *James*: James was a leader of the church in Jerusalem and a half-brother of Jesus (as per Christian belief). He is believed to have written the book of James, which emphasizes the importance of Christian faith and good works.
7. *Peter*: Peter was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus and a leader of the early church. He is believed to have written the letters of 1 Peter and 2 Peter, which address various issues facing the church at that time.

Historical figures involved in the collection and compilation of the New Testament

The process of compiling the 27 books of the New Testament into a single canon took several centuries and involved many individuals and groups.

1. *First-century Christians*: The earliest Christians were Jews who believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. They wrote and circulated letters, gospels, and other texts that told the story of Jesus and his teachings.
2. *Early Christian communities*: As the Christian movement grew, different communities developed their own collections of texts that they considered authoritative. Some of these collections included only the Gospels, while others included additional letters and writings.
3. *Marcion*: In the second century, a Christian leader named Marcion proposed his own canon of Scripture that included only ten of Paul's letters and an edited version of Luke's Gospel. Marcion preached that God had sent Jesus Christ who was an entirely new, alien god, distinct from the vengeful God of Israel who had created the world. His views were rejected by the wider Christian community, but they helped to stimulate debate and discussion about which books should be considered part of the New Testament.
4. *Church Fathers*: Throughout the second and third centuries, Christian leaders known as Church Fathers wrote letters, sermons, and other works that cited and discussed various books of the New Testament. They also debated which books should be included in the canon.
5. *Councils*: In the fourth century, several councils of bishops were held to resolve disputes and establish the official

teachings and practices of the Christian church. These councils also discussed which books should be included in the New Testament. The Councils of Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD) both affirmed the 27 books that are now part of the New Testament.

The Synod or Councils of Hippo refers to the synod of 393 which was hosted in Hippo Regius in northern Africa during the early Christian Church. Additional synods were held in 394, 397, 401 and 426. Some were attended by Augustine of Hippo. Saint Augustine, was a philosopher of Berber origin and the bishop of Hippo Regius in Numidia.

6. *Athanasius*: The bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, wrote a letter in the year 367 in which he listed the 27 books of the New Testament that were widely accepted by the Christian community. This letter helped to solidify the canon.

The Canonization of the New Testament

The Councils of Hippo and Carthage were two important church councils held in North Africa in the late 4th and early 5th centuries, respectively. These councils played a significant role in consolidating the New Testament as it is known today.

The Council of Hippo was held in 393 AD and was attended by 19 bishops from North Africa. One of the key decisions of this council was to approve a list of canonical books, which included the 27 books of the New Testament. This list was sent to Rome for approval and was later reaffirmed by the Third Council of Carthage in 397 AD.

The Third Council of Carthage was attended by over 200 bishops from North Africa and was held in 397 AD. One of the main purposes of the council was to settle the canon of the New Testament. The council reaffirmed the same list of 27 books that had been approved by the Council of Hippo.

While these councils played a significant role in settling the canon of the New Testament, it is important to note that the process of canonization was not uniform across all regions of the Christian world. Some communities accepted the canon more quickly than others, and there continued to be some debate and variation in the list of accepted books even after the councils of Hippo and Carthage. Nonetheless, these councils helped to establish a widely accepted list of canonical books, and the 27 books of the New Testament that were approved by these councils continue to be recognized by most Christian denominations today.

Christian beliefs about the nature of God

Christian history testifies that there was debate in early Christian orthodoxy about the nature of God. Some people denied the incarnation of God into many people, except in the deity of Jesus. This is known as Docetism. Docetism is a concept that Jesus's body was not human but either a delusion or real but was made of celestial substance (similar to the substance with which God's body is made). Therefore, his sufferings were only apparent, not real. Some people defended the Ariunic philosophy based on the beliefs of Arius of Alexandria (256– 336 AD). It is a belief that Jesus Christ is the begotten Son of God and is different from the Father. In other words, he is smaller god, not coeternal and Divine as the Father. Arius was a Christian priest in Alexandria, Egypt. His teaching became dominant Christology among Christians during his lifetime. Ariunic Christology was considered a heresy by other groups of Christians who considered Jesus Christ as Divine god similar in substance and nature with Father God. In 325 AD, Roman emperor Constantine I, (272- 337) called for a meeting of the council of different Churches, in ancient Nicaea (Iznik, Turkey). The King presided over the first opening session of the meeting. After several sessions, the council condemned Arius and accepted the creed that Jesus Christ, the son of God was, in absolute equality with Father God. After this decision, the emperor exiled Arius branding him as heretic. The above decision was further developed by

Cappadocian Fathers; (i) Basil, the bishop of Caesarea (330-379), (ii) Gregory, the bishop of Nyssa (335 – 395), and (iii) Gregory of Nazianzus, the Patriarch of Constantinople (329-389). They considered God to be a triune entity or the Trinity, comprising three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Ghost).

These three are described as being of the same substance. All Christian traditions, like Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestants believe in Trinity. They also believe that the three persons of the Trinity are in one union in which each person is also a whole God. They also believe that Jesus is an incarnate of God. They deny that one of the three divine figures is God alone, and the other two are not, but that all three are mysteriously God and one. Some Christian groups like Unitarian Universalism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, etc., differ with the mainstream Christianity saying Godhead consists of separate individuals that include Father God, His son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, each having a distinct purpose in the grand existence of human beings.

Christian beliefs regarding divine revelations and human agency within the New Testament

Christians believe that the New Testament books contain both human and divine elements. They believe that the authors of the New Testament were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write what they did. This means that although the books were written by human authors, the content was inspired.

Many Christians believe that the New Testament contains revelations from God, particularly in the books of the Gospels and the letters of the apostles. For example, in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6, NIV), which is seen as a divine revelation about the nature of God and salvation.

In the letters of Paul, he often speaks of receiving visions and revelations from God, such as in 2

Corinthians 12:1-10 where he describes being caught up to the third heaven.

Scholarly understanding regarding divine revelations and human agency in the New Testament

There are scholars who approach the New Testament from a historical-critical perspective and argue that the texts were written by human authors in specific historical and cultural contexts, rather than being directly dictated or inspired by God.

These scholars utilize historical, textual, and cultural analysis to understand the New Testament as a product of human authorship and historical context, rather than as a direct expression of divine revelation. In this context, following reading is important.

1. *Bart D. Ehrman, "Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)"* - Ehrman is a New Testament scholar who has written extensively on the history of the New Testament and the contradictions found within it. In "Jesus Interrupted," he argues that the New Testament was written by humans and that there is no evidence of divine revelations.
2. *Elaine Pagels, "The Gnostic Gospels"* - Pagels is a scholar of early Christianity who has studied the Gnostic texts that were not included in the New Testament. In "The Gnostic Gospels," she argues that the early Christian movement was diverse and that the texts that were included in the New Testament were chosen by a group of humans and not by divine revelation.
3. *John Dominic Crossan, "The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant"* - Crossan is a New Testament scholar who has studied the historical context of the New Testament. In "The Historical Jesus," he argues that

the New Testament was written by humans and that the stories about Jesus were shaped by the historical and cultural context in which they were written.

4. *Burton L. Mack, "Who Wrote the New Testament?: The Making of the Christian Myth"* - Mack is a scholar of early Christianity who has studied the formation of the New Testament. In "Who Wrote the New Testament?," he argues that the New Testament was written by humans and that the stories and teachings in it were shaped by the social and political context in which they were written.

The above scholars have used historical and textual analysis to argue that the New Testament was written by humans and does not contain divine revelations.

The interpretations and translations of the New Testament

The interpretation and translation of the New Testament have a long and complex history, stretching back to the earliest days of Christianity.

As the New Testament was originally written in Greek, it had to be translated into other languages in order to reach a wider audience.

The earliest translations of the New Testament were into Syriac, Coptic, and Latin. These translations were often made by scholars who were not native speakers of the original language and had differing interpretations of the text.

As Christianity spread throughout Europe, the need for translations into the vernacular languages of the people became more pressing.

In the Middle Ages, the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible, completed by Saint Jerome in the 4th century, became the standard version used by the Roman Catholic Church. However, as the Reformation spread in the 16th century, there was a growing desire for translations of the Bible in the languages spoken by the people, such as German, English, and French.

One of the most famous translations of the New Testament was the King James Version (KJV), completed in 1611. This version, which was commissioned by King James I of England, was based on previous translations, but also took into account the original Greek texts. The KJV became one of the most widely read and influential translations in the English-speaking world, and many of its phrases and expressions have become part of the language.

Interpretation of the New Testament has also evolved over time, with different schools of thought emerging and competing for influence.

One of the most significant developments in interpretation was the rise of historical criticism in the 19th century, which sought to understand the New Testament in its original historical and cultural context. Other approaches, such as literary criticism and feminist criticism, have also been influential in shaping our understanding of the New Testament.

Conclusion

The New Testament is a collection of 27 books written by various authors over a period of several decades in the first century CE. These books provide a record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, as well as the early Christian church. The origins and authorship of some of these books are subject to debate among scholars, but the historical evidence suggests that they were written by human authors rather than through divine revelation.

The canonization process of the New Testament was a gradual one and was not completed until several centuries after the books were written.

The councils of Hippo and Carthage and the one called by Roman emperor Constantine I in 325 AD, played a significant role in the process of consolidating the New Testament canon.

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