

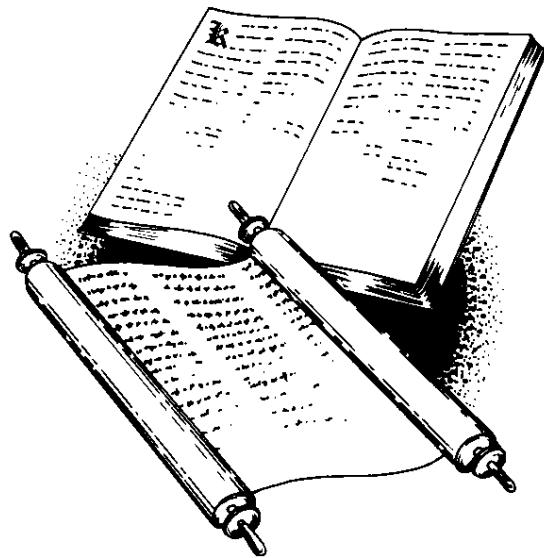
Why 27 Books of the New Testament?

The collection of NT books are known as “The Canon.”

“When we speak of the canon of scripture, the word ‘canon’ has a simple meaning. It means the list of books contained in scripture, the list of books recognized as worthy to be included in the sacred writings of a worshipping community. In a Christian context, we might define the word as ‘the list of the writings acknowledged by the Church as documents of the divine revelation.’”*

There were Five criteria that any book or letter had to meet to be considered part of the canon.

1. Apostolic Authority – Was it written by an Apostle or a close associate of an Apostle?
2. Antiquity – Does it date from the time of the apostles? This criteria could easily be listed as a subcategory of Apostolic Authority for if it wasn't from the apostolic age then obviously an Apostle or close associate could not have written it.
3. Orthodoxy – Does it teach the faith the same as known Scriptures? This too could be listed as a subcategory of Apostolic Authority for they book or letter must teach the same as known Apostolic writings.
4. Universality – Was it accepted by all the Churches? This was important because a particular writing may have been popular in a certain area but rejected everywhere else. Therefore, to avoid any cultural bias, the book or letter must have been accepted everywhere (or at least by a vast majority).
5. Traditional Use – Has it always been accepted by the Churches everywhere? In other words, the book or letter must not have been of later acceptance by the Churches.



* F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*. p. 17