

Growth Institute: Scripture & Tradition in the Patristic Era, AD 100-500

Theologians have naturally appealed to two main sources: _____ and _____.

Recognizing Scripture

The early church did not _____ what was or was not Scripture; instead, they _____ which books were inspired.

Criteria for inspiration:

- _____ refers to texts composed by an apostle, or someone close to an apostle.
- _____ refers to texts considered “catholic” (meaning “universal”) that were affirmed and used widely in Christian worship.
- _____ refers to texts that were theologically consonant with the other Scripture texts.

Developing Tradition

“_____” simply refers to the doctrine given to the church by Jesus or the apostles, or a summation of biblical doctrine.

The Father’s used the language of “_____” to describe a summary of the church’s teaching and how it was used as a standard for orthodoxy.

Case Studies

1. The *Muratorian Fragment*

- Appeals to a text’s apostolicity.
- Points to the orthodoxy of texts as a basic criterion for inclusion in the canon.
- Uses the category of catholicity to point to the texts that are recognized as inspired throughout the church.

2. Athanasius *Letter 39* (c.367)

Athanasius composed his list “to set forth in order the books that are canonized, transmitted, and believed to be divine, so that those who have been deceived might condemn the persons who led them astray, and those who have remained pure might rejoice to be reminded (of these things)”

He later said of his list that these books, “are the springs of salvation, so that someone who thirsts may be satisfied by the words they contain” and in “these books alone the teaching of piety is proclaimed.”

3. Irenaeus on the *Rule of Faith*

Irenaeus provides several summaries of the rule of faith with a general triadic structure that follows the basic points of the baptismal confession of _____, _____, and _____ (Matt. 28:19).

Articles of faith:

1. God, the Father.
2. The Word of God, the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. The Holy Spirit.

Irenaeus _____ that when the Scriptures are read as a whole, they _____ with these three points of doctrine and this theological _____ becomes the basic confession and tradition of the church derived from Scripture.

4. Hippolytus, *On the Apostolic Tradition*

The church's faith was passed on through the process of _____, or what is known as catechesis.

The church's rule of faith, or confessional standards, were linked with the ordinance of baptism and the believer's entrance into the church.

For the Church

From the earliest days of the church, Scripture and tradition are the two sources that inform Christian faith and practice.

It seems clear that Scripture holds the primary place of authority, but the Fathers would not think that tradition is entirely separate and distinct.

The early church _____ the inspiration of Scripture.

The proper _____ of Scripture and tradition.

The church should not _____ tradition.