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**How to Read and Study the Bible**  
**Lesson Five – Part 4: How We Got the New Testament**  
**Development of the NT Canon: Marcion, Irenaeus, and Eusebius**

**Lesson Five – Part 4 Topics**

- Reflection Questions
- Key Terms
- Important Emphasis
- Development of the NT Canon: Marcion, Irenaeus, and Eusebius
- Check Your Progress Questions

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**Reflection Questions**

A. Name a contemporary Preacher/Teacher who dazzles listeners with exciting and persuasive words that on first hearing sound great, but under closer examination turn out to be half-truths or outright false teaching or false doctrines about Jesus Christ.

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B. What can believers do to protect themselves from falling for half-truths and false teaching or doctrines about Jesus Christ?

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**Key Terms**

<i>Antithesis (Contradictions)</i>	Eusebius	Heretic(s)
<i>Against Heresies</i>	Excommunication	Ireneus
Canonization	False Doctrines	Jesus Christ
Crucifixion	God	Marcion
Docetic	Gnostics	Orthodoxy
Docetism	Gnosticism	Scriptures
Docetists	Gospels	Threats
<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	Greek Dualism	

## Important Emphasis

In Christian thought since the eight century, a church father (pater ecclesiae) is a teacher living within the first seven centuries ( eight among Greeks) whose teaching the church has recognized as Orthodox (Early Church)

The four basic requirements have been orthodox doctrine, sanctity of life, Agreement with the church, and antiquity. For some to be named doctor of the Church; outstanding learning is further required!

Today protestant and catholic scholars alike generally regard the church Fathers as indispensable historical witnesses to early biblical exegesis and the History of doctrine.

The idea of an older authority called – Father is far older Christendom. It is found In various cultures, including Greek and Roman, and notably in the Hebrew Bible, where God is Father and the Patriarchs are fathers too. The term father in the church is old. The Apostle Paul Spoke of himself as a father Converts 1 Cor. 4:15

In the Martyrdom of Polycarp this aged bishop at Smyrna is called the teacher of Asia the father of Christians Origen addressed several bishops as papa in His dialogue with Heraclides.

Without using the name father, Christian authors of the second century claimed to Adhere to the traditions of their predecessors making the claim against the Innovations of heretics. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*

Orthodox- The word orthodoxy comes from joining two Greek words: orthe, meaning right or correct, and doxa, meaning glory. Orthodoxy means correct or sound doctrine

The Word orthodoxy does not appear in Christian scriptures, although several biblical themes are congenial to the idea. Paul speaks of this in 1 Cor. 11:2, 28; 1 Cor. 15:1-3 and Roman 16:17 ; Gal. 1:23)

## Overview

The *New Bible Dictionary* breaks the development of the New Testament canon into specific periods of time. In Lesson 5, Part 3 we studied:

The Earliest Period, AD 30-99

The Apostolic Fathers, AD 100-200

We learned that the writings of the Apostolic Fathers are significant because those men were close to the events of the life of Christ and the apostolic era (First Century AD). They addressed important issues such as the Trinity, the deity and eternity of Christ, and salvation.

This week in **Lesson 5, Part 4**, we will study:

- The Influence of Marcion, c.a. AD 140
- Irenaeus and Eusebius

### **The Influence of Marcion, c.a., 140**

There were several factors that caused the recognition of the New Testament canon. [These factors included authentic *and* spurious (false, fake, and forged) writings, as well as attacks on the authentic writings.]

Aberrations [abnormalities, deviations, and irregularities] of the Christian faith also appeared during the first and second centuries. \_\_\_\_\_ [groups and factions] sought to retain the Mosaic law, \_\_\_\_\_ sought to tie Christianity to a philosophical system that proclaimed matter was evil and that spirit was good, \_\_\_\_\_ tried to corrupt the canon, and \_\_\_\_\_ corrupted the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and eschatology.

**Marcion** was known as one of the most threatening \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christian faith. However, Marcion's \_\_\_\_\_ teachings were instrumental in moving the church toward canonization of the New Testament.

### **HERETIC**

A heretic is someone who embraces and teaches a \_\_\_\_\_.

In the NT Hairesis, translated as “faction” and used in a pejorative sense 1 Cor 11:19, Gal. 5:20; and 2 Pet 2:1. In each of these instances, the context reveals that the evil associated with heresy results from behavior that shatters the community. The result of

heresy is that bond of charity that unites the hearts and minds of the community of believers is broken.

Consequentially, an understanding of heresy involves at least a minimal understanding of the interrelation of the truth and doctrine, for if the heart and mind of the community is unified by adherence to a common teaching or symbol system, then heresy results from a departure by one person or a group from this common self-understanding. *The New Dictionary of Theology*

In AD 144, Marcion was \_\_\_\_\_ from the church because of his views about God. He totally rejected the God of the Old Testament and claimed that He could not be the God that Jesus preached about. Marcion also rejected the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, the Pastoral Epistles, all the general epistles, and Revelation.

Marcion later gathered a group of his disciples and formed his own Christian movement. In response to the teachings of the church, Marcion wrote and published *Antithesis (Contradictions)*. This was an abomination to the true Christian church. However, Marcion's actions actually aided the church in the advancement of authentic Christianity in that the church was forced to determine the true canon of \_\_\_\_\_ because of Marcion's selective canon.

During the time of Marcion, there were also the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, which posed threats to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christian faith.

**ORTHODOXY.** Authorized or generally accepted theory, doctrine, or practice.

**DOCETISTS.** An early Christian sect that affirmed the deity of Christ while denying His humanity.

**DOCETISM** comes from a Greek word that means "seems or appears." Docetism was a gnostic teaching that stated that Jesus only "seemed" to die. This false doctrine taught that because Jesus was not really human, He could not have been harmed by the events of the Crucifixion.

**GNOSTICISM** was a religious movement that began within the Christian church. It was based upon a \_\_\_\_\_ [contrast] of good versus evil and body versus spirit.

**GNOSTICS** taught that salvation was attained through avoiding contamination with matter.

It is believed that the apostle Paul addressed the emergence of this gnostic doctrine in his letter to the Colossians (1:21-23; 2:8-10).

Reasons why it is important to learn the history of the development of the Bible:

- So that we can competently answer those who may raise criticisms of the faith that have been settled for nearly 2,000 years.
- To help us see the indestructible character of the Word of God.

God's Word has withstood years of intense and unrelenting examination, yet it still stands as the unaltered truth of God's self-revelation.

### **Irenaeus to Eusebius**

Two men who were very important to the development of the Christian church in the second and third centuries—Irenaeus (ca., AD 130-202) and Eusebius (AD 265-339).

Irenaeus was the most passionate defender of the Christian faith during the attacks of the docetic and gnostic heretics. His most notable writing in defense of the faith is entitled *Against Heresies*.

Eusebius, a bishop of Caesarea and author of *Ecclesiastical History*, was one of the later Christian scholars to set forth a listing of the New Testament canon including the four Gospels Acts, the epistles of Paul and John and the book of Revelation.

### **Checking Your Progress Questions**

1. Who was Marcion and how did he influence the advancement of the true church and Christian faith?

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2. What two movements began in the early church that taught false doctrine?

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3. What are some reasons believers should study the history of the development of the Bible?

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4. What is Irenaeus known for as it relates to the Christian faith?

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5. What biblical books and epistles were included in the New Testament canon by Eusebius?

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