

## **Compilation:**

1. As time passed, certain writings were recognized as especially **valuable** and were passed on, **copied**, and **translated**.
2. The problem of **false teaching** (heresy) created a need for an official "canon."
3. The problem of **persecution** created a need for an official "canon."

## **Authority Test**

	<b>New Testament Gospels</b>	<b>"Gnostic" Gospels</b>
<b>Manuscripts to compare:</b>	_____ to compare and determine exact wording of original documents	_____ _____ to compare
<b>Date written:</b>	Within _____ of those who knew or saw Jesus	_____ years later than the latest NT writings
<b>Authorship:</b>	Named and identified disciples of Jesus with first-hand knowledge	Anonymous

## **Small Group Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Growing up, what do you remember hearing or believing about the Bible? What things did you question? What things did you not question?
- 2) Here is a quote from the Da Vinci Code: *"The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God...Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book."* Do you believe the Bible was written by God, people, or a combination of the two? Explain your thoughts.
- 3) Why do you think it was important to establish the canon, or the official list of the books in the Bible? What criteria would you have used to determine which gospels should be included?
- 4) How significant is it that the four Gospels in the New Testament have roots in the eyewitness accounts of people who knew Jesus and saw his miracles and post-resurrection appearances?
- 5) If God is really behind the Bible, why do you think he has not eliminated any doubts or confusion about that?

# SEPARATING **FACT** from **FICTION**



Series: The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction?

Title: "Can We Trust the Four Gospels?" ..... Pastor Sean Kelly, June 11, 2006

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## **The "Other" Gospels**

- ◆ Commonly known as the Gnostic Gospels.
- ◆ Gnosticism was a heresy that developed late in the first century.
- ◆ "Canon" - comes from the Greek word meaning "the norm, the standard, the rule."

When were the Gnostic Gospels written? 50-150 years after the latest New Testament writings.

## **The Biblical Canon**

### **Criteria:**

1. Must be connected with one of Jesus' apostles (either directly, or through a student of the apostle).
2. Contents had to be consistent with the kind of teaching Jesus did.
3. Had to have wide-spread influence in churches in Israel, Asia Minor, and southern Europe.