

Understanding How We Got Our Bible

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1. Introduction and Definitions **Page 1**
2. How the Bible books are organized – Old Testament **Page 2**
3. How the Bible books are organized – New Testament **Page 3**
4. How the Bible was canonized i.e., formalized. **Page 4**

Key Words and Definitions:

- 1) The word Bible - literally means "books" (from the Latin).
- 2) Testament - "contract", as in "last will and testament", synonym: covenant.
 - (1) Paul said "But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ." (2nd Corinthians 3:14, New King James Version)
 - (2) Jesus said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28 NKJV)
 - (3) In the original Greek, the words covenant and testament are the same word.
- 3) Canon (from the Latin), books that are accepted as part of the Bible.

Other Words and Terms Used in this Lesson:

1. Apocrypha ("A -pock-rah-fa") - These are 14 books that are part of the Catholic Old Testament, but not part of the Protestant Old Testament. The New Testament is exactly the same in both versions.
2. Aramaic - A "cousin" language to Hebrew. It was the business language of the Middle East at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. A small percentage of the Old Testament was written in this language. It became the standard language for the Jews at this time. This is also the language that Jesus spoke during His ministry.
3. Dead Sea Scrolls - Old Testament Scrolls found in 1940's in a cave near the Dead Sea. Some other writings were found and there are no New Testament scrolls. Kept there by a Jewish cult called the "Essences".
4. Greek - The common language of most of the Roman Empire. The entire New Testament was written in Greek.
5. Hebrew - The original language of the Jewish people. It became a dead language from essentially the time of the Babylonian Captivity until the time of Modern Israel where it was brought back as a language. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew (with a small percentage written in Aramaic).
6. Koine Greek - It refers to "common Greek". The idea is the New Testament was written in a language everyone could understand.
7. Latin Vulgate Translation - First official complete bible including both the Old and New Testament. It was organized by a man named Jerome around 400AD. It included the Apocrypha based on the orders of the Roman Emperor. It became the standard for the church for almost 1,000 years.
8. Major Prophets - Old Testament prophet writers that wrote "thick" books. From Isaiah to Daniel.
9. Masoretic Text - A specific text used as the Old Testament standard. Oldest complete copy is from about 1,000 AD.
10. Minor Prophets - Old Testament prophet writers that wrote "thin" books. From Hosea to the Old Testament end.
11. Narrative Bible Books - Bible books that tell a story from start to finish
12. Papyrus (Parchment) Scrolls - Writing material used made from plants that were originally used to write and copy the books of the bible until around the 1st or 2nd Century AD.
13. Pentateuch - A Greek word meaning "five". It refers to the first five books of the Old Testament.
14. Poetry (or Wisdom) Bible Books - Bible books written in a poetry style. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme. The idea is about having two or more thoughts that connect.
15. Prophecy Bible Books - Bible books where the primary emphasis is about stating prophetic predictions.
16. Septuagint - This is the Old Testament translated into Greek a few hundred years before Jesus. When Jesus quotes from the Old Testament, He quotes from this translation.
17. Torah - A Hebrew word that means "law". It usually refers to the first five books of the Old Testament and sometimes it can just refer to the Book of Deuteronomy.

Old Testament Organization

The Old Testament books are organized 1) by category (narrative, poetry, or prophecy) and then in Chronological order.

Old Testament Book (Author, Date)	Style of Writing; Primary Topic Emphasis
1. Genesis (Moses 1450-1410 BC)	Narrative; from "Beginning" to Jews entering Egypt.
2. Exodus(Moses 1450-1410 BC)	Narrative; from Birth of Nation of Israel
3. Leviticus(Moses 1450-1410 BC)	Instructional; Focus on How God is to be worshipped.
4. Numbers(Moses 1450-1410 BC)	Narrative; 40 years of "wandering in the desert".
5. Deuteronomy(Moses 1450-1410 BC)	Instructional;; Focus on laws, promises, warnings
6. Joshua(Joshua 1406-1375)	Narrative; generation after Moses, enter Promised Land
7. Judges (Unknown, "tradition"- Samuel time of Judges 1375-1050 BC)	After Joshua, Israel was ruled by Judges during this time period. Mostly a history of failure to obey God.
8. Ruth (Unknown, "tradition"- Samuel) written during time of Judges 1375-1050 BC)	Narrative; A story that takes place during time of Judges.
9. 1 Samuel (Samuel via scribes Nathan&Gad) (covers time of 1105-1010 BC)	Narrative;. In Jewish Bible, 1 st & 2 nd Samuel – One book. Covers the time of Rise and fall of 1 st King – Saul.
10. 2 Samuel(same as 1 st Samuel, others suggested "Nathan's son"; time frame 1010-970)	2 nd Samuel covers the reign of King David.
11. 1 Kings (Unknown, "tradition"- Jeremiah) (covers time 970 BC – 853 BC)	Narrative;. In Jewish Bible, 1 st & 2 nd Kings – One book. Starts with first king after David -> Solomon.
12. 2 Kings(Unknown, "tradition"- Jeremiah) (covers time 853 BC- 586 BC)	After Solomon, Israel "splits" into 2 kingdoms: Northern & Southern. Book covers reign of North/South kings.
13. 1 Chronicles (Unknown, "tradition"- Ezra) (Chpts 1-8 "Adam to David", then 1010-970 BC)	Narrative;. In Jewish Bible, 1 st & 2 nd Chronicles– 1 book. After Chapter 9, book covers time from David to the conquering of both kingdoms (100 years apart). Emphasis on how each king did from God's perspective.
14. 2 Chronicles (Unknown, "tradition"- Ezra) (970BC - 538 BC)	
15. Ezra (Ezra, 450 BC)	Narrative; 70 years after Southern Kingdom conquered/ dispersed, Jews come back to Israel. Ezra & Nehemiah were leaders in this movement.
16. Nehemiah (Nehemiah, 445-432 BC)	
17. Esther (Unknown, "tradition"-Mordecai, 483-471BC)	During "return" period, many Jews stayed in lands of captivity. Esther is Jewish woman picked to be a Queen.
18. Job (Job 2000-1800 BC)	Poetry style; Debate over why do the innocent suffer?
19. Psalms (Mostly David 1010-970, others:1440-586 BC)	Poetry style; Focus on how to praise and worship God.
20. Proverbs (Solomon 950-930 BC)	Poetry style; Advice for living a Godly life.
21. Ecclesiastes (Solomon approx. 935 BC)	Poetry style; Advice on "don't let this happen to you"
22. Song of Songs (Solomon approx. 950-945 BC))	Poetry style; Love poem, advice on marital relationship
23. Isaiah (Isaiah 700-681 BC)	Prophecy emphasis; These authors are called " the major prophets " <u>only</u> because the <i>size</i> of their books are bigger than the rest of the prophets. Emphasis on future events, predictions of 1 st and 2 nd comings of Jesus, future events about Israel and surrounding nations.
24. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 627-586 BC)	
25. Lamentations (Jeremiah 586 BC)	
26. Ezekiel (Ezekiel approx. 571 BC)	
27. Daniel (Daniel approx 535 BC Events 605-535 BC)	
28. Hosea (Hosea 715 BC written to Northern Kingdom)	
29. Joel (Joel 835 - 796 BC written to Southern Kingdom)	
30. Amos (Amos760-750 BC written to N. Kingdom)	
31. Obadiah (Obadiah 853-841BC written to Edomites)	
32. Jonah (Jonah 785-760 BC, written to all Israelites)	
33. Micah (Micah742-687 BC, written to all Israelites)	Prophecy emphasis; These authors are called " the minor prophets " only because the size of the books are much smaller. The emphasis is some/ all of the same themes as the major prophets.
34. Nahum (Nahum 663-654BC to Nineveh & S.Kngdm)	
35. Habakkuk (Habakkuk 612-589 BC to S. Kingdom)	
36. Zephaniah (Zephaniah 640-621 BC S. Kindom/ All)	
37. Haggai (Haggai 520 BC to those returned exile)	
38. Zechariah (Zechariah 520-518 BC, 480 BC Same #37)	
39. Malachi (Malachi 430 BC Same as #37)	

For more on Bible Authorship, see [Http://www.bibleprobe.org/bibauth.html](http://www.bibleprobe.org/bibauth.html)

The Roman Catholic " Apocrypha " and the New Testament Organization

Apocrypha (Catholic Old Testament Books 250-400 BC)

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 Esdras (Places after Narrative Books) 2. 2 Esdras 3. Book of Esther (Additional Chapters) 4. 1 Maccabees 5. 2 Maccabees 6. Tobias (Tobit) 7. Judith | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Book of Wisdom 9. Sirach 10. Baruch 11. Susanna 12. Azariah 13. Manasseh 14. Bel |
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Most Apocrypha are located after Esther in this order Except Book of Wisdom, listed after Proverbs
 Most of the books are narrative in style, some poetry works as well.

For more on the Apocrypha (Catholic website) [Http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03267a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03267a.htm)

The New Testament books are organized first by the books about life and resurrection of Jesus and then, those written about and by early apostles. Paul wrote the largest chunk of the New Testament. All of the New Testament writers were 1st Century Apostles (and not just part of the "12").

New Testament Book (Author, Date)	Style of Writing; Primary Topic Emphasis
1. Matthew (Matthew, the Apostle 60-65 AD)	Narrative; Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel. Matthew was one of 12 Apostles.
2. Mark (Mark, possibly dictated from Peter 55-65 AD)	Narrative; Emphasis on Jesus as a servant for man. Mark was cousin of Luke. Also called "John-Mark".
3. Luke (Luke approx. 60 AD)	Narrative; Emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. Luke was missionary with Paul and a historian.
4. John (John, the Apostle 85-90 AD)	Narrative; Emphasis on Jesus as son of God. John was 1 of 12 apostles, <u>not</u> John the Baptist.
5. Acts (Luke 63-70 AD)	Narrative; story of early apostles after the resurrection. Explains "who" Paul is, and his missionary journeys.
6. Romans (Paul approx. 57 AD)	Instructional, nicknamed "Gospel according to Paul".
7. 1 Corinthians (Paul approx. 55 AD)	Instructional letters by Paul. Mostly deal with correcting church problems and explaining Christian doctrinal viewpoints
8. 2 Corinthians (Paul approx. 55-57 AD)	
9. Galatians (Paul approx. 49 AD)	
10. Ephesians (Paul approx. 60 AD)	
11. Philippians (Paul approx. 61 AD)	These are nicknamed Paul's "prison letters" as they were written from a jail cell while Paul was waiting for trial in Rome. A lot of emphasis on "joy in tough times."
12. Colossians (Paul approx. 60 AD)	
13. 1 Thessalonians (Paul approx. 51 AD)	
14. 2 Thessalonians (Paul approx. 51-52 AD)	Additional instructional letters by Paul. There are correctional issues and some end-time issues.
15. 1 Timothy (Paul approx. 64 AD)	These are nicknamed Paul's "pastor letters" as they were written to his missionary associates. A lot of advice on church organization and ministry.
16. 2 Timothy (Paul approx. 66-67 AD)	
17. Titus (Paul approx. 64 AD)	
18. Philemon (Paul approx. 60 AD)	Short letter. Part of "prison letter" category.
19. Hebrews (author unknown, consensus opinion - was Paul, written before 70AD)	Instructional letter focusing on Jesus as fulfillment of promises made in the Old Testament.
20. James (James, half-brother of Jesus, est. < 49 AD)	Instructional, emphasis on Christian living.
21. 1 Peter (Peter approx. 62-64 AD)	Instructional; Written near end of Peter's life. Emphasis on keeping your focus on Jesus during difficult times.
22. 2 Peter (Peter approx. 67 AD)	
23. 1 John (John, the Apostle approx. 85-90 AD)	Instructional letters written by same "John" who wrote the Gospel of John & Revelation. Emphasis on the love of God.
24. 2 John (John, the Apostle approx. 90 AD)	
25. 3 John (John, the Apostle approx. 90 AD)	
26. Jude (Jude, half-brother of Jesus, approx. 65AD)	Instructional, emphasis on false teachers.
27. Revelation (John, the Apostle approx. 95AD)	Mainly Prophecy; Emphasis on end time events.

Key Points in the History of the Canonization of the New Testament (95-395AD)

(Most of these documents were preserved through Vatican Library & Archeological findings)

- 1) AD 95 - Clement of Rome wrote a letter to the Christians in Corinth and uses material from Gospels of Matthew and Luke.
 - a) He also was familiar with the Book of Romans and the 2 Corinthian Letters, as well as 1st Timothy, Titus, 1st Peter & Ephesians.
 - b) This means these books were in his possession at this time.
- 2) AD 125 In the late 1900's an archeologist named John Rylands found sections of a "Gospel of John" scroll that date back to AD 125. It is kept in Manchester England in a university named after him.
- 3) AD 115 "The Epistles of Ignatius". This is commentaries on books of the Bible.
 - a) There is direct reference to the Gospels and a number of Paul's letter.
 - b) Ignatius draws a distinction between his letters and "scriptures".
- 4) AD 130 "The Epistle of Barnabus". This is commentaries on books of the Bible. Used the term "It is written" referring to various parts of the New Testament as Scripture"
- 5) AD 110-120 (approx.) "The Epistle to the Philippians" by Polycarp. Polycarp studied under the Apostle John. He uses the term "Scriptures"
- 6) AD 130-140 (approx.) Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis mentions by name the Gospels of Matthew & Mark, and accepts them as Scripture.
- 7) AD 150-170 (approx.) Irenaeus, student of Polycarp, in his writings, quotes from all 4 Gospels, references to Acts, 1 Peter, 1 John, all of Paul's letters except Philemon, and book of Revelation
- 8) Titian, pupil of Justin Martyr, made reference to the 4 Gospels as being scriptural. He also acknowledged "other" gospels as being heretical (false).
- 9) AD 170 - a "complete" Bible was found (8th Century copy) which was mutilated at both ends. Includes all 4 gospels, Acts, All 13 Paul's Epistles, Jude, 1st and 2nd John (not 3rd) & Revelation).
- 10) AD 170 pieces of the Bible found in Syriac and Old Latin translations.
- 11) AD 185-254 Origen, A church historian and scholar. He wrote commentaries on most of the books of the Bible. He believed all 27 were inspired by God.
- 12) By the year 300, there was still some disagreement over the final 27 books, but not over any single book. For example, almost all of the Western Church accepted Revelation, but not all the Eastern churches. The opposite was true of Hebrews.
- 13) AD 270-340 Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, a church historian, wrote a 3-chapter book on the canon of Scripture. He categorized all 27 books as either "universally accepted or majority accepted". He also eliminated some of the false-books as being heretical (false).
 - a) When Roman Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity, he asked Eusebius to prepare for him 50 copies of the Bible. The 27 books we have today are included.
- 14) AD 367 Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria formalized the list of 27 books and formally eliminated other heretical books.
- 15) AD 397 " Council of Carthage formalized the 27 books we have today.

Notes and Resources:

Source: "The Origin of the Bible", Tyndale Publishers 1992. From the chapter: "The Canon of the New Testament" by Milton Fisher, from the book "The Origin of the Bible", Tyndale Publishers 1992.

References for this page:

<http://www.bible-history.com/> (A web site specializing in Bible History)