

## Period of Time Bible Transcribed Summary

The process of the Bible being "transcribed" (meaning, originally written down by its authors and then copied by scribes) spans a very long period of time. It's not a single event, but a continuous process of composition and preservation.

Here's a breakdown of the timeframes:

### 1. Original Composition (Writing by Authors):

- **Old Testament:** The oldest parts of the Old Testament are believed to have been written around **1400-1200 BCE** (traditionally, the time of Moses for the Pentateuch). The writing of the various books continued over many centuries, with the latest books being completed around **400-100 BCE** (e.g., some prophetic books, Ezra, Nehemiah, and later wisdom literature like Daniel, though its final form is debated). So, the Old Testament was composed over a period of roughly **1000 to 1300 years**.
- **New Testament:** The books of the New Testament were written in a much shorter, more concentrated period, generally between **about 50 CE and 100 CE**.<sup>2</sup> Paul's letters are among the earliest, starting around 50 CE, and the Gospel of John and Revelation are among the latest, often dated to the 90s CE. This means the New Testament was composed over approximately **50-60 years**.

**Combining both Testaments, the original writing of the Bible's books took place over a period of roughly 1,500 to 1,600 years.**

### 2. Copying and Preservation by Scribes:

This process began almost immediately after the original texts were written and continued for well over a millennium until the invention of the printing press.

- **From the time of original writing (1400 BCE for oldest OT texts) through the early centuries CE (for NT texts), and up until the 15th century CE** when the printing press revolutionized book production, scribes were constantly copying and re-copying the biblical texts by hand.<sup>3</sup>
- Key periods for scribal activity include:
  - Ancient Israelite scribes (for the Hebrew Bible).
  - Jewish scribes who produced the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.<sup>4</sup>
  - Early Christian scribes who copied New Testament texts from the 1st to 4th centuries CE.
  - The **Masoretes**, Jewish scribes who worked from the 6th to 10th centuries CE, meticulously standardizing the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.<sup>5</sup>
  - Monastic scribes in the Middle Ages (roughly 5th to 15th centuries CE) who copied the Bible in Latin (the Vulgate) and other early vernaculars.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, if "transcribed" refers to the entire history of its written existence from original composition to widespread copying, it spans from **around 1400 BCE to the 15th century CE**, a period of roughly **2,900 years**. If it refers specifically to the act of copying by hand, that continued for approximately **1,500 to 2,000 years** after the completion of the original writings, depending on which part of the Bible you consider.