



The Bible

The Bible is a collection of 73 books in the Catholic Bible, (*66 books in the Protestant Bible*) divided into two main sections: the Old Testament, which contains ancient Hebrew scriptures, and the New Testament, which focuses on Jesus and the early Christian church.

The Old Testament was written between approximately 1200 BC and 165 BC, while the New Testament books were written by Christians in the first century AD.

The Christian Bible's overall structure was finalized around 400 AD, though it wasn't available in English until the printing press in the 15th century.

History

Old Testament: The original Hebrew Bible, written by various authors over a period of about 1000 years, primarily in Hebrew with some sections in Aramaic.

New Testament: Written in the first and second centuries AD by Christians, focusing on Jesus Christ and the beginnings of the Christian church.

Compilation: The final structure of the Bible was established around 400 AD.

Translation: Initially handwritten, the Bible was translated into many languages after the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, making it more accessible to the public.

Layout

Two main sections: The Bible is divided into two testaments: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Old Testament: Contains the 39 books of the original Hebrew Bible. It is often further divided into the Pentateuch (the first five books), followed by books of history, poetry, and prophecy.



New Testament: Contains 27 books and focuses on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, as well as the early Christian church.

Book order: The books are arranged in a specific order within each testament, and each book is divided into chapters and verses for easy reference. For example, the book of John, chapter 3, verse 16 is written as "John 3:16".

The Bible is a unified collection of 73 books (66 books in the Protestant canon) written by over 40 authors across 1,500 years, divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Its history involves a long process of composition, circulation, and canonization, while its layout organizes books primarily by literary genre rather than strict chronology.

Historical Development

Composition (c. 1500 BC - AD 90): The books of the Bible were written over many centuries in different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).

Old Testament: The ancient Hebrew scriptures were written between approximately 1200 and 165 BC, documenting the creation, the history of the Israelite people, their moral and legal codes, and prophecies.

New Testament: Written by early Christians in the first century AD (roughly AD 50-90), these books focus on the life, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the start and spread of the early Church.

Canonization (c. 400 AD): The process of deciding which books were divinely inspired and authoritative (the biblical "canon") occurred over several centuries. The content of the Old Testament was largely agreed upon by Jewish tradition around 290 BC.

For the New Testament, an informal consensus on most books was reached by the mid-2nd century, and the final list of 27 books was formally recognized by church councils in the late 4th century (e.g., Council of Hippo in 393 AD and Carthage in 397 AD), effectively ratifying what was already widely accepted in the churches.



Transmission and Translation: For centuries, Bibles were handwritten in Latin. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century and the efforts of translators like William Tyndale (who was executed for his work) made the Bible available in common languages like English, a process that continues today in over 2,500 languages.

Layout and Structure

The Bible is divided into two major sections, which are then further organized into categories based on literary genre:

Old Testament

The Pentateuch (or The Law/Torah): The first five books, traditionally attributed to Moses, which lay the foundation for creation, humanity's origins, and the Mosaic Law and covenant with Israel.

Books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Historical Books: These 12 books narrate the history of the Israelites from their entry into the Promised Land to their exile and return.

Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

Poetry and Wisdom Books: Five books exploring themes of faith, wisdom, and human emotion through poetry, songs, and proverbs.

Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

Prophetic Books: Seventeen books (divided into Major and Minor Prophets based on book length, not importance) containing the messages of God's prophets to Israel and other nations.

Books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the 12 Minor Prophets (Hosea to Malachi).

New Testament (27 books)

The Gospels: Four biographical narratives that provide accounts of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection.



Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

History (Early Church): The single book of Acts details the actions of the apostles and the expansion of the early Christian church after Jesus' ascension.

Book: Acts of the Apostles.

The Epistles (Letters): Twenty-one letters, mostly written by the Apostle Paul, offering guidance, instruction, and theological teaching to early Christian communities and individuals.

Books: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude.

Prophecy (End Times): The final book, an apocalyptic work containing symbolic visions of future events and the ultimate return of Christ.

Book: Revelation.



The main difference is the Old Testament canon: Catholic Bibles contain seven books (and additions to Daniel and Esther) that Protestant Bibles do not, totaling 73 books for Catholics and 66 for Protestants. These additional books are called the Deuterocanonical books by Catholics and are referred to as the Apocrypha by Protestants, who base their Old Testament on the Hebrew Bible canon. The New Testament is identical in both.

	Catholic Bible	Protestant Bible
Total Books	73	66
Old Testament	46 books	39 books
New Testament	27 books	27 books
Key Difference	Includes the Deuterocanonical books, which are: • Tobit • Judith • 1 and 2 Maccabees • Wisdom (of Solomon) • Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) • Baruch • Additions to Esther • Additions to Daniel	Excludes the Deuterocanonical books, which Protestants refer to as the Apocrypha - (doubtful authenticity, although widely circulated as being true.).
Old Testament Basis	Follows the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures)	Follows the Hebrew Bible canon, as affirmed by Judaism