

Here is the historical record answering both parts of your question regarding the King James Version and the so-called "Negro Bible."

1. Were There Two Versions of the King James Bible (80 Books vs. 66 Books)?

Yes, absolutely. The original King James Bible commissioned by King James I and printed in **1611 contained 80 books**, not 66.

The original 1611 canon was divided into three distinct sections:

1. **The Old Testament** (39 Books)
2. **The Apocrypha** (14 Books situated between the Testaments, including Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, and Maccabees)
3. **The New Testament** (27 Books)

How It Was Reduced to 66 Books

The 14 books of the Apocrypha remained an integral part of the King James Version for over two centuries. They were read in churches, cited in court, and printed in family Bibles.

However, during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, European Bible societies—most notably the **British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS)**—began stripping the Apocrypha out of standard printings.

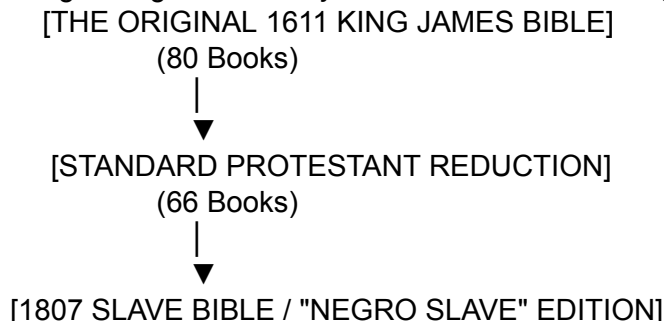
- **Cost Efficiency:** Printing 66 books was significantly cheaper to produce and ship globally than printing 80 books.
- **Theological Debates:** Protestant publishers argued that the 14 books of the Apocrypha, while historically valuable, were not "divinely inspired" on the same level as the Hebrew Old Testament canon.

By 1885, the Apocrypha was officially omitted from almost all standard commercial printings of the KJV, leaving the modern 66-book version that most people recognize today.

2. Did the "Negro Bible" Come Out of the King James Version?

Yes. The text for the infamous "**Slave Bible**" (officially titled *Select Parts of the Holy Bible for the Use of the Negro Slaves in the British West-India Islands*) was directly excerpted from the **King James Version**.

It was compiled in London in **1807** by British abolitionist missionaries and slaveholders operating through the *Society for the Conversion of Negro Slaves*.



(Heavily redacted KJV: ~14 Books / ~10% OT & 50% NT)

What Was Done to It?

The editors realized that if enslaved Africans read the full King James Version, the text would inspire resistance, liberation, and equality. To prevent uprisings while still using religion as a tool of social control, they systematically censored the Bible:

- **Massive Redactions:** Over **90% of the Old Testament** and **50% of the New Testament** were completely cut out. A standard Bible has 1,189 chapters; the Slave Bible was reduced to just **232 chapters**.
- **Removed Passages:**
 - The entire **Book of Exodus** was removed so enslaved people could not read about God delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.
 - Passages like **Galatians 3:28** ("*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*") were deleted.
 - The **Book of Revelation** was almost entirely removed so they could not read about the ultimate downfall of oppressive earthly empires and the final judgment.
- **Retained Passages:** They kept specific verses encouraging submission and obedience to human masters, such as **Ephesians 6:5** ("*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh...*").

Only three physical copies of this 1807 KJV excerpted "Slave Bible" are known to exist in public archives today (including one held at Fisk University and exhibited at the Museum of the Bible).

The Historical Takeaway

The historical record confirms both of your statements:

1. **The original King James Version included 80 books**, including the Apocrypha, before it was reduced to 66 books by Western printing societies.
2. **The "Negro Slave Bible" was directly carved out of the KJV**, removing the parts that preached freedom, justice, and deliverance, and leaving behind only a heavily edited fraction designed to enforce compliance.