

Bible Introduction
Week 5: Compilation
Student Handout

Composition of the Bible

Our Bible is one book divided into 2 sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament.
“Testament” means covenant.

From Websters 1828:

- **COVENANT**, *noun* [L, to come; a coming together; a meeting or agreement of minds.] A writing containing the terms of agreement or contract between parties
- **COVENANT**, *verb intransitive* To enter into a formal agreement; to stipulate; to bind one self by contract.
- **COVENANT**, *verb transitive* To grant or promise by *covenant*

It is composed of a total of 66 books - 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.

Old Testament (1445 – 400 B.C.)

There are 4 parts to the Old Testament.

- The Law of Moses or The Pentateuch (5 books):
 - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- History (12 books):
 - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, 1st and 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
- Poetry or Wisdom (5 books):
 - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon
- Prophecy (17 books):
 - Major prophets (5 books): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel
 - Minor prophets (12 books): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

New Testament (500 – 100 A.D.)

There are 4 parts to the New Testament.

- The Gospels: Jesus’s life and ministry
 - Matthew ~ He was a tax collector turned Apostle, and this is his own eyewitness account
 - Mark ~ He was a missionary, and he recorded the eyewitness account of Peter, an Apostle

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- Luke ~ He was a physician, and he recorded the eyewitness account of Paul, an Apostle
 - John ~ John was a fisherman turn Apostle, and this is his own eyewitness account
- Acts of the Apostles: Peter and Paul's ministries and the start of the early church
- Epistles or Letters:
 - Paul's letters to the churches
 - Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians
 - Paul's letters to individuals
 - 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, and Philemon
 - General
 - Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, Jude
- Apocalypse or Prophecy:
 - Revelation

Classification of the Bible

- Jewish usage originally divided the Old Testament by the Law & the Prophets but now divides as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings
 - Jesus confirms this in Luke 24:44
 - The Hebrew Bible combines 1st & 2nd Samuel, 1st & 2nd Kings, 1st & 2nd Chronicles, and Ezra and Nehemiah, giving their classification only 24 books.
- The Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek between 250-150 B.C., known as the Septuagint (LXX).
- The Vulgate or Latin Bible, translated by Jerome in 383-405 A.D. It follows the Greek arrangement and is the standard Bible which Wycliffe's first English Bible and all other English Bible translations now use.

Canon

- Canonization explains to us how the Bible received acceptance both in Israel and in the New Testament church. It is how a particular writing was measured to see if it stood up to the standard of Holy Scripture.
- "Kanon" literally means rod, ruler, staff, or measuring rod

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- 1 Timothy 4:1
 - The early church was already seeing false doctrines springing up and warning the early church to reject them (1 Timothy 4:7).
- Luke 1:4 AMPC ~ [My purpose is] that you may know the full truth *and* understand with certainty *and* security against error the accounts (histories) *and* doctrines of the faith of which you have been informed *and* in which you have been orally instructed.

Old Testament

Old Testament canon was determined by:

- Jewish tradition
- Spiritual authority
- Recognition as sacred by Jewish Temples
- Opinions of religious leaders
- The conviction of the common people

It was recognized and accepted by the time of Jesus' birth.

- Jesus quoted from 24 Old Testament books
 - He also confirms Genesis to Chronicles in Luke 11:51 by referring to “the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah”.
- The New Testament quotes from a total of 34 Old Testament books.
- Hebrew canon consists of 3 parts.
 - Torah or Teaching
 - Genesis to Deuteronomy
 - Nevi'im or Prophets
 - Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the 12 minor prophets grouped into one book
 - Ketuvim/Kethubim or Writings
 - Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles

New Testament

- New Testament canon was determined by use of the early church. It was through the revelation of the Holy Spirit to the early church members as they read the circulating writings.

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- It was determined by these qualities:
 - Authority, Inspiration or Divine Attributes ~ Do the writings carry God's authority? Do the writings produce faith, and do they have the power to transform lives? (John 14:26)
 - Origin/Prophetic or Apostolic Authorship ~ Was it written by an Apostle or one of their disciples?
 - Authentic authorship ~ Were they certain that it was written by the author claimed and did his audience accept that it was written by him?
 - Universal acceptance and usage ~ Were they accepted by the early church and used regularly for life and faith?
- At the beginning of the canonization 20 books were accepted but Hebrews, 2nd & 3rd John, 2nd Peter, Jude, James and Revelation were debated until the beginning of the 4th century. By the end of that century all the books were accepted by all the churches.
- Internal evidence of canon:
 - The New Testament writings were in circulation in the early church and were accepted as inspired by those who were reading and teaching them.
 - 1st Thessalonians 2:13
 - 2 Peter 3:15-16
- External evidence of canon:
 - The Muratorian Fragment (180 A.D.) is the world's oldest known list of New Testament books, and it affirms 22 of the 27 books.
 - The Gospels, Acts, all 13 of Paul's letters, Jude, 1st, 2nd & (possibly) 3rd John, and Revelation
 - The Festal Letter of Athanasius (367 A.D.) was one in a series of letters by the Bishop of Alexandria that confirms all 27 books and only those books.
 - Eusebius (an early 4th century church historian listed four categories of books circulating in the early church.
 - Recognized books: 22 of 27 books: Gospels, Acts, Paul's 13 letters & Hebrews, 1st John, 1st Peter, & Revelation
 - Disputed books: James, Jude, 2nd Peter, 2nd & 3rd John
 - Rejected books: These were books that didn't have the authority of Scripture
 - Heretical books: These were books that were forgeries with little to no theological value and were not even worth debating.

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Apocrypha & apocryphal writings:

- The Apocrypha are the books included in the Septuagint translation but were not a part of the Hebrew Bible.
- Apocryphal writings is a term applied to writings outside Biblical canon and are not considered inspired.
- Why are they not considered Scripture or part of the canon?
 - They do not have enough manuscript evidence.
 - There were tonal shifts and thematic problems.
 - These books were not ever quoted by Jesus or any of the other New Testament authors.
 - They do not claim within themselves to be Scripture.
 - They are not cited as Scripture within Scripture.
 - The canon was closed already. They are not included in the early lists of books considered Scripture and were only found after the 4th century.
 - They have various obvious errors.
 - They have no internal evidence of inspiration and no prophecies to be proven.
 - The Jewish people do not consider them inspired. The Old Testament was already complete. Jesus confirms and refers to the already complete Old Testament canon.
 - There is a lack of apostolic evidence. They were either forgeries or written centuries after Biblical events and therefore cannot be eyewitness recordings or recorded testimony of eyewitnesses.