

Introduction to the Bible

I. The divine authority of Scripture

- A. Old Testament written by divinely-inspired prophets
- B. New Testament written by divinely-appointed apostles

II. The canon of Scripture

- A. *Old Testament Canon: Law (Torah), Prophets and Writings (Hagiographa)*
(the 3 sections are first mentioned in the Greek prologue to apocryphal *Sirach*—130 BC)

Torah = Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Prophets= Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, “The 12” (Minor Prophets)

Writings = Ruth-Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Eccles, Song of Sol; Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Neh, Chron.

Samaritans (who split from Jews when the latter destroyed the temple on Mt Gerazim in 110 BC) only recognized the Torah (as did Sadducees)

Apocrypha (so named by Jerome in his Vulgate trans.) consists of 15 books written between the Old and New Testament times, included in the Septuagint (Greek OT), and attached to the Old Testament canon in Roman Catholic Bibles (though Roman Catholics omit 1 & 2 Esdras and 3 & 4 Maccabees)

Josephus (1st century Jewish historian) said the apocryphal Jewish writings were not regarded “worthy of equal credit” with OT

Philo (1st century Jewish philosopher) quotes from OT profusely, but never from *Apocrypha*
Jesus and the apostles seemed to accept the Jewish canon of the Old Testament Luke 11:50-51; 24:27, 44 (approximately 300 OT quotes in the New Testament, none from the *Apocrypha*)

In the second century, Justin Martyr and Theophilus of Antioch cited OT scripture frequently, but not the *Apocrypha*. The earliest known Christian list of OT books, made by Melito (AD 170) did not include the *Apocrypha*. The catholic churches began to accept these books after the second century, but the reformers (16th century onward) rejected them.

- B. *New Testament Canon:*

The Four Gospels—Papias (AD 100) gives information about Matthew and Mark; Ignatius (AD 110) echoes words from John; Four Gospels attested as universally recognized by Irenaeus and Tatian (AD 170). Acts is recognized because it is the second volume of Luke.

Paul’s letters—“all his epistles” called “scripture” by Peter (2 Pet.3:15-16)

By the end of the 2nd century, 21 of the 27 books were accepted as scripture by all churches (questions remained about James, 2 Peter, Jude, 2 & 3 John, Hebrews) Revelation was accepted from the beginning, but was later contested in the East)

Origen (AD 240) recognized all 27 books, but mentioned that James, 2 Peter, Jude, 2 & 3 John were still disputed

Around AD 300, Eusebius said some churches had high regard for 1 & 2 Clement, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Didache, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Epistle Barnabas, but he believed they were spurious

Athanasius (367) recognized the 27 books and said some of the others were edifying, but not scripture

All 27, and no others, were recognized at the synods of Hippo (393), Carthage (397).

Jerome's Vulgate (Latin) translation (translated from AD 382-405) reflected this canon

The churches of Syria did not accept Revelation, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude until the sixth century

III. The specific contents of the Bible

A. Old Testament

1. 17 Historical Books (5 major; 12 lesser: 9 pre-exilic; 3 post-exilic)
2. 5 Poetry Books
3. 17 Prophetic Books (5 major; 12 lesser: 9 pre-exilic; 3 post-exilic)

B. New Testament

1. 5 Historical (4 Gospels and Acts)
2. 13 Pauline Epistles (9 to churches; 4 to individuals)
3. 8 Non-Pauline "General" Epistles (assuming non-Pauline authorship of *Hebrews*)
4. 1 Prophetic apocalypse

IV. Survey of the biblical narrative

From Adam to Christ=4000 years (probably 4004 BC to 4 BC)

Central event of Old Testament history: The promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)

First 2000 years: Pre-Abrahamic (From Adam to Abraham):

Adam to Noah's flood = approx. 1700 years (ten generations)

Flood to Abraham = approx. 300 years (ten generations)

Second 2000 years: Years of Promise unfulfilled (From Abraham to Christ)

Abraham to David = 1000 years

David to Christ = 1000 years

Third 2000 years: The Kingdom inaugurated (From Christ forward)

Jesus' private life (30 years)

Jesus' public life (3+ years)

The year of obscurity

The year of Popularity

The year of opposition

The Passion and resurrection

From Pentecost to close of Acts (30+ years)