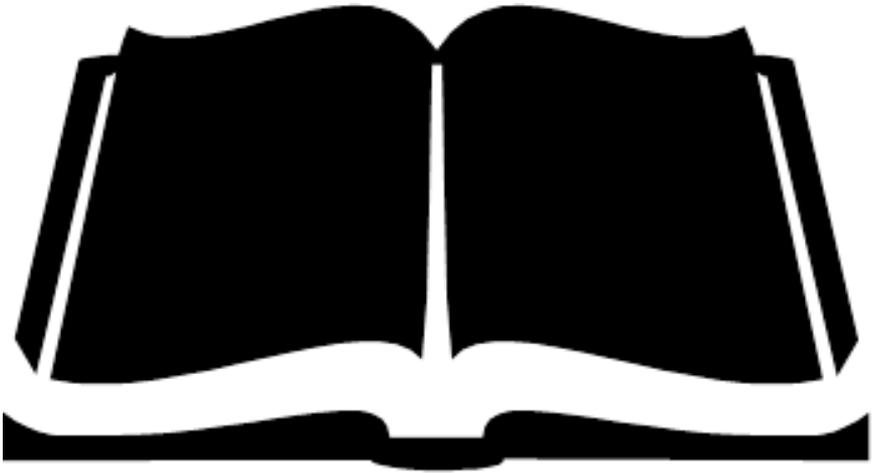


# HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE





*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV

*Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV

**The Bible is inspired by God and is a book made up of many books. It was written by many men of God, on many materials over many years. It was copied very carefully by scribes by hand until the printing press was invented. Now millions of Bibles have been printed.**

*\*Adapted from **How We Got The Bible wall chart**, Rose Publishing.  
Compiled by Phil Waldo*

# SUMMARY

## **Old Testament Written**

Approximately 1500-400 BC

Written on stone, clay and leather

## **New Testament Written**

Approximately AD 45-100

Written on papyrus

The oldest New Testament fragment (from John 18) that we have today was copied in Greek on a papyrus codex around AD 110-130.

## **Bible Copied on Papyrus**

Scrolls of leather, and later of papyrus, were used to make copies of the Scriptures.

A papyrus codex is a bound volume made from sheets folded and sewn together, sometimes with a cover. They were used more than scrolls after AD 1-100.

## **Bible Copied on Fine Animal Skins**

Fine quality animal skins from calves and antelope (vellum) and sheep and goats (parchment) were used for over 1000 years to make copies of the Bible approximately AD 300-1400.

Two of the oldest vellum copies (AD 325-350) that exist today are the Vatican Codex and the Sinaitic Codex.

## **Bible Printed by Printing Press after 1455**

Wycliffe Bibles were inscribed by hand on vellum in the 1300s-1400s. Some copies took ten months to two years to produce and cost a year's wage.

The Gutenberg Bible was the first book to be printed on a printing press with moveable metal type in 1455.

## **The Bible, God's Word to the World**

The Bible is now printed on paper in many versions and languages. It is also on tape recordings, compact discs and computers.

## 2000 BC

**Old Testament** events were written down in Hebrew (portions in Aramaic) over centuries. In Exodus, the Lord tells Moses to write in a book. Other OT writers, inspired by God, include leaders, kings and prophets. Together, these writings on leather scrolls and other materials are called the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament.

## 500 BC

**Ezra**, a priest and scribe, collects and arranges some of the books of the Hebrew Bible – the Old Testament – about 450 BC, according to Jewish tradition.



**A Scribe**

## 200 BC

**The Septuagint** is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). It is translated in 250-100 BC by Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. (The word *Septuagint* means seventy, referring to the tradition that 70 or 72 men translated it. It is often abbreviated LXX, the Roman numeral for seventy.) The books are arranged by subject: historical, poetic, and prophetic. It includes the Apocrypha (meaning “hidden”) referring to seven books that were included in the Hebrew Bible until AD 90 when they were removed by Jewish elders.

## AD1

**Papyrus**, a plant, can be cut into strips and pressed into sheets of writing material. The Egyptians write with reed pens on papyrus paper. The New Testament books are probably first written down on papyrus scrolls. Later Christians begin to copy them onto sheets of papyrus, which are bound and placed between two pieces of wood or tablets for covers. This form of early book is called a codex.

## Time of Jesus

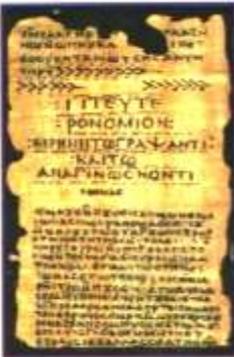
4 BC – AD 33? Jesus quotes the Old Testament often. He says that he did not come to destroy the Scriptures, but to fulfill them. He says to his disciples, “These are the words which I spake unto you, ... that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

*Luke 24:44-45*

## AD 100

Followers of Jesus Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter and Jude write the Gospels, history, letters to other Christians, and the Revelation between AD 45 and 100. The writers quote from all but eight of the OT books. These writing in Greek are copied and circulated so that by about AD 150 there is wide enough use of them to speak on the “New Testament.”

**Council at Jamnia** (AD 90) Jewish elders confirm the Old Testament canon, without the Apocrypha, as authoritative.



**Early Coptic Translation**

**Earliest Translations**  
AD 200-300 Latin, Coptic (Egypt), and Syriac (Syria).

**Church Fathers** accept the writings of the Gospels and Paul's letters as *canonical* (from a Greek word referring to the *rule* of faith and truth). Origen lists 21 approved New Testament books, Eusebius lists 22 accepted books.



**Saint Matthew Lindisfarne Gospels**  
900?

## AD 300

**The New Testament books** are collected and circulated throughout the Mediterranean about the time of Constantine, the Roman emperor who legalizes Christianity in AD 313. By AD 400 the standard of 27 NT books is accepted in the East and West as confirmed by Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine and three church councils. The 27 books of the NT were formally confirmed as canonical by the Synod of Carthage in AD 397, thus recognizing three centuries of use by followers of Christ.

**Jerome** starts translating the Scriptures into Latin in AD 410 and finishes 25 years later. This translation, called the Latin Vulgate, remains the basic Bible for the next 1000 years.



**Jerome**

## AD 500

**Roman Empire** declines. Germanic migrations (AD 378-600) cause new languages to emerge.

**The Masoretes** are special Jewish scribes entrusted with the sacred task of making copies of the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) approximately AD 500-900. They develop a meticulous system of counting the number of words in each book of the Bible to make sure they have copied it accurately. Any scroll found to have an error is buried according to Jewish law.

## AD 600

**Christianity reaches Britain** before AD 300, but Anglo-Saxon pagans drive Christian Britons into Wales (AD 450-600). In AD 596, Augustine of Canterbury begins evangelization again.

**Bede**, a monk and scholar, makes an Old English (Anglo-Saxon) translation of portions of Scripture. On his deathbed in 735, he finishes translating the book of John.

**Alfred the Great**, King of Wessex, 871-901, translates portions of Exodus, Psalms, and Acts.

**Normans** conquer England (1066) and make French the official language. No more English Bibles are produced until the 1300s.

**Middle English** emerges, popularized by works such as the *Canterbury Tales* and Richard Rolle's *Psalter* (1340).

**Caedman**, an illiterate monk, retells portions of Scripture in Anglo-Saxon (Old English) poetry and song (AD 676).

**Andhelm of Sherborne**, AD 709, is said to have translated the Psalms.

**Aldred**, Bishop of Durham, inserts a translation in the Northumbrian dialect between the lines of the Lindisfarne Gospels (950).

**Aelfic**, 955-1020, translates portions of the OT into Anglo-Saxon.

## AD 1400

**The First English Bible** is translated from Latin in 1382 and is called the Wycliffe Bible in honor of priest and Oxford scholar John Wycliffe. During his lifetime, Wycliffe had wanted common people to have the Bible. He also criticized a number of church practices and policies. His followers, derisively called Lollards (meaning “mumblers”) included his criticisms in the preface to the Wycliffe Bible. This Bible is banned and burned. Forty years after Wycliffe’s death, his bones are exhumed and burned for heresy.

**In 1408, in England, it becomes illegal** to translate or read the Bible in common English without permission of a bishop.

**World’s first printing press** with moveable metal type is invented in 1455 in Germany by Johann Gutenberg. This is perhaps the single most important event to influence the spread of the Bible.

**The Gutenberg Bible** is the first book ever printed. This Latin Vulgate version is often illuminated by artists who hand paint letters and ornaments on each page.



**Gutenberg page**

## AD 1500

Erasmus, a priest and Greek scholar, publishes a Greek translation and a more accurate Latin translation of the NT in 1516. His goal is that everyone be able to read the Bible, from the farmer in the field to the weaver at the loom. Erasmus' Greek text forms the basis of the "textus receptus" and is used later by Martin Luther, William Tyndale, and the King James (Authorized Version) translators.



**Erasmus**

**Martin Luther** translates the NT into German in 1522.

**William Tyndale**, priests and Oxford scholar, translates the NT from Greek (1525), but cannot get approval to publish it in England. He moves to Germany and prints Bibles, smuggling them into England in sacks of corn and flour. In 1536, Tyndale is burned at the stake. His final words are "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." Tyndale is called the "Father of the English Bible" because his translation forms the basis of the King James Version. Much of the style and vocabulary we know as "biblical English" is traceable to his work.

**The Coverdale Bible** is translated by Miles Coverdale (1535) and dedicated to Anne Boleyn, one of King Henry VIII's wives. This is the first complete Bible to be printed in English.



**William Tyndale**

**The Matthew's Bible**, translated by John Rogers under the pen name "Thomas Matthew," is the first Bible published with the king's permission (1537). Printed just one year after Tyndale's death, its NT relies heavily on Tyndale's version, and even has a tribute to him on the last page of the OT. Tyndale's initials are printed in 2 1/2-inch block letters. Later Thomas Cromwell, advisor to King Henry VIII, entrusts Coverdale to revise Matthew's Bible to make the Great Bible.

**The Great Bible** is placed in every church in 1539 by order of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop under King Henry VIII. It is read aloud daily except during services and sermons. This Bible is chained to the church pillars to discourage theft.



**The "Chained Bible"**

## AD 1555

### England's Queen

**Mary** bans Protestant translations of the English Bible. John Rogers and Thomas Cranmer are burned at the stake. Later some 300 men, women, and children are also burned.



**Queen Mary Tudor**

### The Geneva Bible

Exiles from England flee to Geneva, Switzerland, and in 1560 print the Geneva Bible, a complete revision of the Great Bible with the OT translated from Hebrew. The Geneva Bible contains theological notes from Protestant scholars John Calvin, Beza, Knox, and Whittingham. It is the first Bible to use Roman type instead of blackletter. This is the Bible of Shakespeare and the one carried to America by the Pilgrims in 1620. The 1640 edition is the first English Bible to omit the Apocrypha.

### Bishops Bible

A new translation begins under Queen Elizabeth in 1568. It is translated by several bishops of the Church of England in answer to the Geneva Bible.

### Rheims-Douai Bible

was translated into English from the Latin Vulgate by Catholic scholar Gregory Martin, while in exile in France (1582/1609). It becomes the standard translation for the Catholic church.

## AD 1600

### **King James Version or Authorized Version**

King James I of England commissions 54 scholars to undertake a new Bible translation. Over the next six years, six teams of scholars using the Bishops Bible and Tyndale's Bible, as well as available Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, complete the new version in 1611. The King James Version (also called the "Authorized Version," even though King James never gave the finished version royal approval) is revised several times.

The edition used today was revised in 1769. It is the most popular Bible for more than 300 years.



**King James**

### **Older Manuscripts**

**Discovered!** Between 1629 and 1947, several of the earliest known copies of the Bible are found.

**Codex Alexandrinus**, a copy of the NT from AD 400, perhaps the best copy of the book of Revelation, is made available to western scholars in 1629.

**Codex Sinaiticus** (earliest complete copy of the NT, copied in AD 350) is found in St. Catherine's Monastery near Mt. Sinai.

**Codex Vaticanus** (earliest and probably best copy known of the NT from AD 325) is released to scholars in 1889 by the Vatican Library.

## AD 1800

**The Dead Sea Scrolls**, found in a cave in 1947 by a shepherd, contain the oldest known copies of portions of the OT.



**Scroll of Isaiah**

The oldest complete manuscript of any book of the Bible

## Ad 1900

**A Scroll of Isaiah** that is part of the Dead Sea Scrolls (copied around 100 BC) is remarkably close to the standard Hebrew Bible. It gives overwhelming confirmation of the reliability of the Masoretic copies.

During the 1900s more than a hundred NT manuscripts are found in Egypt.

### Modern Translations

These manuscripts along with new understanding of ancient languages have given rise to new English translations.

**1885**

### **The English Revised Version**

A British revision of the King James Version.

**1901**

### **American Standard Version (A.S.V.)**

Revision of the King James Version in American English.

**1926**

### **Moffatt Bible**

A very popular modern-language version.

**1931**

### **Smith-Goodspeed, An American Translation**

Modern American English.



**1952 The Revised Standard Version (R.S.V.)**

A revision of the A.S.V. NT revised 1971.

**1958 J.B. Phillips' New Testament in Modern English**

A paraphrase originally made for youth.

**1966 Jerusalem Bible**

Translation by Catholic scholars in Jerusalem.

**The New Jerusalem Bible, 1985.**

**1970 New English Bible**

"Timeless" modern English. Revised 1989.

**1970 New American Bible (N.A.B.)**

Official version of the Catholic Church. Revised New Testament in 1986.

**1971 The Living Bible**

Popular paraphrase.

**1971 New American Standard Bible**

Revision of the A.S.V. Very literal.

**1976 The Good News Bible (Today's English Version)**

Vernacular English translation.

**1978 New International Version (NIV)**

Dignified, readable.

**1982 New King James Version**

Modernization of the K.J.V. using the same manuscripts.

**1989 New Revised Standard Version**

"Gender Neutral" revision of the R.S.V.

**1991 Contemporary English Version**

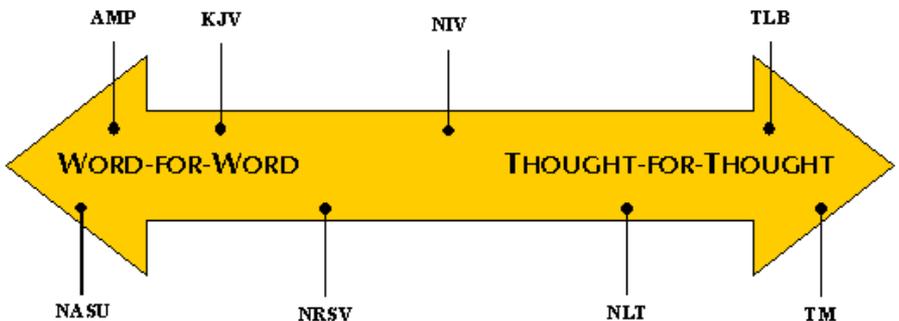
"Natural, uncomplicated" English.

**1995 God's Word for the Nations**

Contemporary English.

**1996 New Living Translation**

A revision of the Living Bible to make it a translation.





# HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

## TEN KEY POINTS

1. The Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
2. The Bible is made up of 66 books that were written over 1600 years (from approximately 1500 BC to AD 100) by more than 40 kings, prophets, leaders, and followers of Jesus. The Old Testament has 39 books (written approximately 1500 BC-400 BC). The New Testament has 27 books (written approximately AD 45-100). The standard Hebrew Bible today has the same text as the English Bible's Old Testament, but the Hebrew Bible divides and arranges the text differently.
3. The Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek.

4. The books of the Bible were collected and arranged and recognized as inspired sacred authority by councils of rabbis and councils of church leaders based on careful guidelines.
  
5. Before the printing press was invented, the Bible was copied by hand. The Bible was copied very accurately, in many cases by special scribes who developed intricate methods of counting words and letters to insure that no errors had been made.
  
6. The Bible was the first book ever printed on the printing press with moveable type (Gutenberg Press, 1455, Latin Bible).
  
7. There is much evidence that the Bible we have today is remarkably true to the original writings. Of the thousands of copies made by hand before AD 1500, more than 5300 Greek manuscripts from the New Testament alone still exist today. The text of the Bible is better preserved than the writings of Caesar, Plato, or Aristotle.

8. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the astonishing reliability of some of the copies of the Old Testament made over the years. Although some variations exist (mostly spelling variations), no variation affects basic Bible doctrines.
  
9. As the Bible was carried to other countries, it was translated into the common language of the people by scholars who wanted others to know God's Word. Today there are still 2000 groups with no Bible in their own language.
  
10. By AD 200, the Bible was translated into seven languages; by AD 500, 13 languages; by AD 900, 17 languages; by AD1400, 28 languages; by 1800, 57 languages; by 1900, 537 languages; by 1980, more than 1100 languages.

