

HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO BE

Song—Wonderful Words of Life

Lectio Divina—2 Kings 22:8–11



I. Introduction and Review

II. Early Development of Hebrew Scriptures—

- A. *Tanakh*
 - 1. *Torah* or “Teaching/Law,” also called the Pentateuch or the “Five Books of Moses”;
 - 2. *Nevi'im*, or Prophets;
 - 3. *Ketuvim*, or Writings.
- B. Role of scribes and oral traditions.
- C. Ancient Hebrew religious texts.
- D. Dating of early Hebrew scriptures (e.g., *Torah*, Prophets). 1200 BCE and 200 BCE

III. Canonization of the Hebrew Bible

- A. Emergence of the Hebrew Bible Canon
- B. **Apocrypha or Deutero-Canonical Books** (ἀπόκρυφος (*apókryphos*) ‘hidden’) Ancient books thought to have been written some time between 200 BCE and 100 CE. For Methodists and Anglicans, “instruction in life and manners, but not for the establishment of doctrine.” 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach), Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy, additions to Daniel, Prayer of Manasseh, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees.
- C. **Old Testament Pseudepigrapha**—(3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, Assumption of Moses, Ethiopic Book of Enoch (1 Enoch), Slavonic Second Book of Enoch, Book of Jubilees, 3 Baruch, Letter of Aristeas, Life of Adam and Eve, Ascension of Isaiah, Psalms of Solomon, Sibylline Oracles, 2 Baruch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, 4 Ezra, and others)
- D. **Septuagint**—3rd and 2nd century BCE (Legend—72 scholars) into Koine Greek
- E. **Criteria for Inclusion/Exclusion**—long evolutionary process

IV. Development of the New Testament

- A. Historical context of the New Testament (Oral tradition, Q?)
 - 1. Gospels and Acts
 - 2. Letters and Writings
- B. Formation of the Pauline Epistles—c. 48–60 CE
- C. Dates and authors of the Gospels. (Mark circa 70 CE, Mathew and Luke 80 CE)

V. Canonization of the New Testament

- A. Process of selecting and recognizing the New Testament books.
 - 1. Ecumenical Decision
 - 2. Catholicity
 - 3. Orthodoxy
 - 4. Apostolic
- B. Early Christian communities’ role.

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C. Key figures

1. **Marcion**—No Old Testament, One Gospel (modified Luke) and Paul
2. **Irenaus**—Four Gospels
3. **Origen of Alexander (184–253 CE)**—His canon included all of the books in the current New Testament canon except for four books: James, 2nd Peter, and the 2nd and 3rd epistles of John
4. **Athanasius (c. 296–373 CE)**—His work at Nice in 325. His list in the Easter letter of 367, Patriarch Athanasius of Alexandria gave a list of exactly the same books that would become the New Testament—27 books—and used the phrase “being canonized” (*kanonizomena*).
5. **The (50?) Bibles of Constantine**—by Eusebius to deliver Bibles for the Church of Constantinople. (331 CE)
6. **Augustine (354–430 CE)**—One is to “prefer those that are received by all Catholic Churches to those which some of them do not receive” (On Christian Doctrines 2.12) Valuing of the opinions of “the more numerous and weightier churches.”

VI. Biblical Translations

- A. Overview of ancient translations— Septuagint, Latin Vulgate.
- B. The impact of the printing press on Bible dissemination.
- C. Modern Translations-Formal equivalent and dynamic equivalent
 1. Role of Archaeology
 2. Dead Sea Scrolls and other significant findings.

VII. Conclusion—Inspiration from writing, passing on, and canonization

600. Wonderful Words of Life

Philip P. Bliss (1874)

1. Sing them over again to me,
wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see,
wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty
teach me faith and duty.

3. Sweetly echo the gospel call,
wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all,
wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior,
sanctify forever.
(Refrain)

Refrain:

Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.