

## The Old Testament

3500 years ago, Moses began to record the Tradition of the Jewish people. Over the next 1400 years, divinely inspired men added to this writing.

These men wrote in Hebrew and Greek. The Septuagint is the Greek Old Testament used the first century.

Through the Holy Spirit, the Jewish leaders discerned the Canon of the Old Testament. However, not all Jewish Tradition was included in the Old Testament, but was passed on orally.

A century after the birth of Christ the Jewish leaders removed the Greek books from their Old Testament Canon to distance themselves from Greek culture. Although the Jews removed these books from their Bible, Christians continued to use them.

After fifteen centuries of Christians using the Septuagint, Protestants removed the Greek books from the Old Testament. The primary reason for this was that these books conflicted with what Protestants wanted to believe.

To remove all doubt, the Council of Trent definitively declared that the Greek books did in fact belong in the Old Testament Canon.

*“So then, brethren, stand  
firm and hold to the  
traditions which you were  
taught by us, either by  
word of mouth or by  
letter.”*

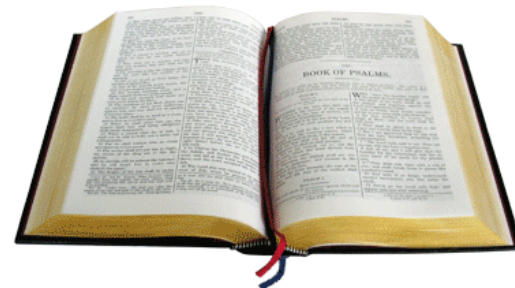
*(2 Thessalonians 2:15)*



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## Where Did the Bible Come From?



## The New Testament

In the first century, divinely inspired men began to record Christian Tradition, although not everything was written down. Paul was the first to write in 53 A.D., and in 95 A.D., John finished what would come to be known as the New Testament.

In the middle of the second century, these writings began to be regarded as Scripture. By the end of the second century, the idea of a New Testament to accompany the Old Testament was firmly rooted in the Christian Church.

By the middle of the fourth century, there were a number of different canons of the New Testament (list of books) in existence. These lists varied as to which books were included and which books were excluded.

Through the Holy Spirit, unity in this matter was achieved in 382 A.D. when the Catholic bishops discerned what books belonged in the New Testament Canon, and what books did not. This new canon was called the Damasan Canon; named after Pope Damasus I.

The Damasan Canon was not accepted without a great deal of resistance,

particularly in Africa. Four African synods were held in which the African bishops declared the Damasan Canon as the canon of the African Church: one in Hippo in 393 A.D., and three in Carthage in 393, 397 and 419 A.D.

In the sixteenth century, Protestants rejected the authority of the Church that canonised the New Testament. They replaced this authority with personal interpretations of the Bible, saying that the Bible itself has absolute authority.

Some Protestants went so far as to remove books from the Damasan Canon because they conflicted with what Protestants wanted to believe. Unlike the books they removed from the Old Testament, Protestants could not justify the removal of the New Testament books, and they therefore returned to the Damasan Canon.

To remove all doubt, in 1546, the Council of Trent definitively declared the Damasan Canon as the complete and perfect canon.

Today, the Damasan Canon is universally used and accepted by Catholics and Protestants alike.

## Questions to Ponder

**1.** Christianity existed for 20 years before any Christian Tradition had been written down. How was this Tradition being passed on during this time?

**2.** Christianity existed for 62 years before what would become the New Testament was completely written. How was the complete Gospel message being passed on during this time?

**3.** In 382 A.D., the Catholic Church discerned what books belonged in the New Testament, and what books did not. Who gave the Catholic Church this authority?

**4.** Protestants claim that the Bible, and not the Church, has absolute authority, and yet they accept the Church's authority to canonise the New Testament. If this is true, at what time did this authority transfer from the Church to the Bible?

It was through the Catholic Church that God created the Bible. Today, God continues to work through the Catholic Church to proclaim the complete Gospel message.