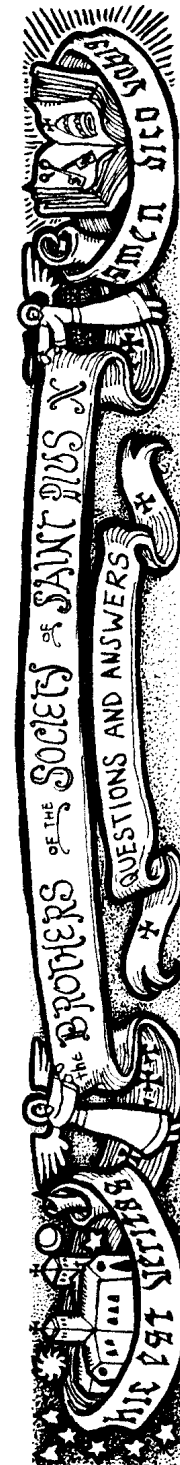
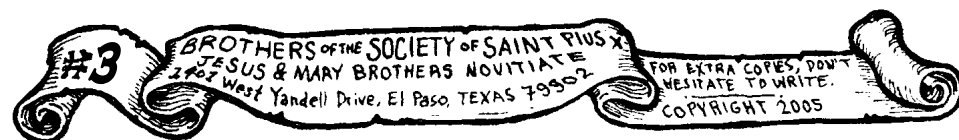


# TIMELINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

- 249BC Ptolemy II requests the translation of the Hebrew Canon into Greek  
 250-125BC Seventy two translators produce the Septuagint (Latin for 70)  
 6-33AD Jesus Christ quotes the Greek Septuagint  
 51 Saint Paul writes his 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle (Thessalonians) in Greek quoting the Septuagint  
 90 Jewish Council of Jamnia rejects the Septuagint and reduces the Hebrew Canon  
 98 Saint John writes the Apocalypse  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Several Latin versions of the Scriptures are made.  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Early Christians use many texts of what will some day become the NT  
 c290 The Jews finally eliminate the deuterocanonical books from their Canon  
 382 Pope Damasus issues a listing of the present OT and NT Canon of 73 books  
 383 Saint Jerome compiles the Vulgate which is universally accepted  
 393 CC's Council of Hippo (North Africa) approves the present Canon of 73 books  
 397 CC's Council of Constantinople produces first bound Bible (Vulgate)  
 397 CC's Council of Carthage (North Africa) approves the same OT and NT canon  
 405 Pope Saint Innocent I approves it again the Canon and closes it  
 750 Saint Bede translates the Bible into Saxon  
 Middle Ages Monks are the copyists for the Bible and other classical and religious texts  
 1377 Pope Gregory XI condemns the heresy of John Wycliffe  
 1382 Followers of John Wycliffe publish his translations  
 1408 CC's Synod of Oxford forbids unauthorized versions of Sacred Scripture  
 1445 *The movable-type printing press is invented by Johann Gutenberg*  
**1456 The Vulgate is the FIRST BIBLE printed**  
 1520 Martin Luther founds the Lutheran church; beginning of the Protestant revolt  
 1525 William Tyndale, an apostate priest translates the NT into English  
 1529 Luther proposes the Hebrew Canon as the Old Testament  
 1534 King Henry VIII breaks from the Catholic Church forming Anglican Heresy  
 1535 Miles Coverdale's Bible, under Cromwell, is the first to omit the deut. books  
 1537 Thomas Matthews (alias John Rogers) revises Tyndale's Bible  
 1539 Cranmer, an Anglican, orders the *Great Bible* to be made  
 1539 Taverner produces a Bible the same year  
 1546 Council of Trent reconfirms the Latin Vulgate as the formal translation of CC.  
 1557 *The Geneva Bible* (Whittingham), with an introduction by Calvin  
 1568 Anglican bishops revise the *Great Bible*, forming the *Bishop's Bible*  
 1572 *The Matthew Parker's Bible* is a revision of the *Bishop's Bible*  
 1582 Gregory Martin translates the NT from the Vulgate in Rheims for the CC.  
 1606 John Smyth founds the Baptist church  
 1609 Martin translates the OT from the Vulgate in Douay for the Catholic Church  
 The Douay-Rheims is the authentic, authorized translation of the Holy Bible  
 1611 *The King James Bible, (Authorized Version)* is a revision of *Bishop's Bible*  
 It is revised again in 1683, 1769, 1806  
 1885 *The Revised Version* is a revision of the *Authorized Version*  
 1947 Dead Sea Scrolls found, with ancient Hebrew copies of the deuterocanonical books  
 1950s+ Many new modern versions, mostly influenced by liberal tendencies in exegesis



# WHAT IS YOUR BIBLE?

What, really, *is* the Bible, and where *does* it come from? Where does it say in Sacred Scripture that one must believe in it, and why do we? *The Bible isn't in the Bible*, therefore it is important for us to know what it is that we are believing in!

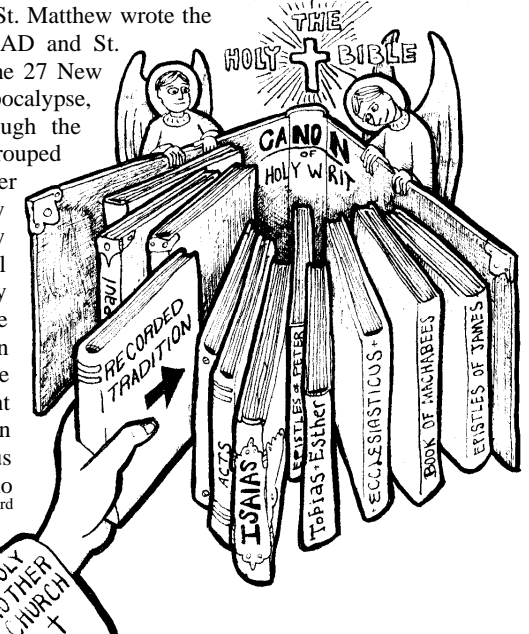
## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The name "Bible" comes from the Greek (byblos) and Latin (biblia), meaning "the books." It is a collection (46 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament) of works containing the word of God transmitted to men throughout the centuries and ending with the death of the last Apostle, Saint John. They were written by men who were inspired by God and who were outstanding in history for their stature, character and altitude of spirit (e.g., Abraham, Moses, Isaias, etc.). These writings are valued not only for their intrinsic worth but also for the records of great historical events and miracles which confirm their authors as men of God.

## HOW DID THE MANY WORKS BECOME ONE BOOK?

The Jews already had a formal compilation (canon) of their Sacred Books, one embodied in the Greek Septuagint (the Alexandrian Canon, which Jesus and the Apostles used), and one in Hebrew (the Palestinian Canon). As for the New Testament, St. Matthew wrote the first Gospel around 48 AD and St. John wrote the last of the 27 New Testament books, the Apocalypse, around 98 AD. Though the books were not grouped together under one cover until much later, they were passed on by Tradition in each chapel where they were widely circulated. So much were their renown that we can practically reconstruct the whole New Testament from quotes contained in the writings of various Fathers of the Church who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. Unfortunately, during this time various writers, some heretics and others

(including some well-meaning preachers), assumed the task of writing their own relations of Gospel events or even to change the Gospels themselves. This prompted Catholic Bishops to judge formally and officially what books were canonical (= inspired by God), which were not (= apocryphal), and even which books were heretical (= condemned). The result was the publishing in various councils of the true canonical list of books.



At the same time, Pope St. Damasus, in 383 AD, seeing textual errors and unclear expressions in the Bibles then in use, ordered Saint Jerome to compile an official version of the Bible in Latin. Saint Jerome was a scholar, who, knowing Greek and Latin, went to live in the Holy Land where from Jewish scholars he learned Hebrew and Aramaic as well as their customs, both new and old. He used all the texts he could find: the ancient Hebrew OT, the Septuagint, those old Latin Bibles, various other pieces and parts, with which he produced the *Latin Vulgate*, which means “common tongue”. Thus, in 397AD the Catholic Church’s Council of Constantinople produced the first bound copy of the New Testament, and in 406 the Old Testament was published. The canon of the Latin Vulgate is the official canon of the Catholic Church. The underlying principle the Church used to determine its official list of books was to accept as Sacred only those books which Tradition tells us were *written* by or *approved* by an Apostle.

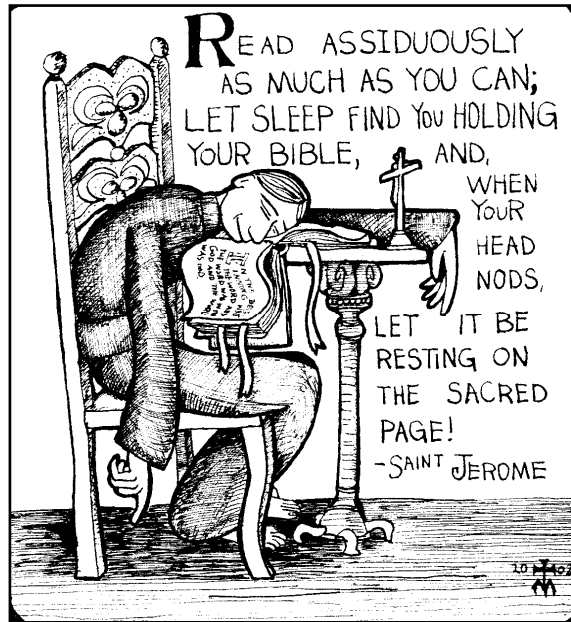
### A WORD ABOUT THE ENGLISH DOUAY-RHEIMS VERSION

Up until the 1900s, the only English version the Church recognized was the Douay-Rheims version, of which even the Protestant scholar, Scrivener, has said: “*Its scrupulous fidelity and exactness are its best recommendation. It is an act of Justice to recognize that none of us has ever been able to reproach its translators with any willful alteration of the Scriptures.*” The Douay-Rheims is still conspicuous for its outstanding fidelity to the Latin Vulgate, which besides being the only Bible officially promulgated by the Church and venerable by its use for 15 centuries, is a critical instrument giving us indirect access to the ancient versions used by St Jerome which are now lost to Scripture scholars.

### WHY DID THE CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPILE A BIBLE?

Christ delivered to the Apostles what is called the *Divine Deposit* - the sum total of His teachings. Commanded to “*go forth and teach all nations,*” the Apostles handed on to their successors what they had received, establishing a tradition. This Divine Tradition, contained in the sound doctrine, teaching and practice of the Catholic Church, is passed on even till today (hence we have popes in succession even from Saint Peter).

Concerning the Bible, we see Christ and His Apostles used the Scriptures, hence we too preserve the OT; The early Church preserved the Apostles’ writings, hence we have an NT; The Apostles taught before, during, and after their writings, thus we have an oral tradition which enables us to identify the Bible. Tradition has been the source that has given us the Bible, and the authentic interpretation! It is important to note here that Jesus Christ never wrote anything in the Bible, nor did He ask anything to be written. Saint John says that if everything that He did were recorded, the volumes would fill the whole world! He ordered the Apostles to “*teach all nations,*” and in love of His words, they *also* wrote. The Bible is not necessary for salvation (else Jesus would’ve said so), but it is a great aid to the ministers of the Church in the teaching and instruction of all nations in the performance of good works, and the building up of morals and true Faith.



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### WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE?

We believe in the Bible because we have the testimony of the Catholic Church that it comes down to us *authentic, historical and integral* from the hands of the Apostles. The Apostles come from Christ, and Christ comes from God. Ultimately, we believe in the Bible because we can verify through the actions of the Church that it is truly God’s word. Without her assurance and authority, there is no reason to value the Bible at all; notice that until the Protestant revolt in the 1600s, never did anyone value it *apart* from her!

### WHICH BIBLE IS THE BEST?

All Bibles extant today claim to be more or less accurate translations of the Manuscripts and Versions that have come down to us faithfully safeguarded by the Catholic (*Jewish tradition, however, has also preserved the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Old Testament*) tradition. They are all, especially the versions from the time of the King James on, the fruit of teams of scholars who get together to discuss their translations and decide upon the best way of saying it in the language into which they are translating. None of these scholars are guaranteed to be infallible or to possess the charism of teaching mankind, thus their translations can only be measured by two standards: either by *human linguistic prudence* and/or the *solemn judgment of the Church* (which Christ founded as the guardian of the Divine Deposit).

With regard to human linguistic prudence, one version is definitely ruled out: the New World Translation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, which *purposely* perverts the received texts in order to favor their own prejudice against the divinity of Christ, as well as many other Christian truths. As for the other versions, their linguistic value can be debated by the experts from many different points of style, literal accuracy, etc. Nevertheless, two important points touching upon the Christian Faith must be clearly understood:

- the question of the Canon itself, and
- its conformity with the original inspired word of God.

With regard to the Canon, we must note that the King James (KJV) and all subsequent Protestant versions (though many recent versions include the omitted books in an apocryphal index) purposely leave out several books which are contained in the original Catholic Canon: *Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Baruch, Tobit* and *1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Machabees* as well as portions of *Daniel* and *Esther* (they call them deuterocanonical, or doubtful). Why do they do this?

King Ptolemy II of Egypt ordered the Hebrew Scriptures to be translated into Greek for his great library in Alexandria. This translation (completed in 125BC) was called the *Septuagint*, after its 72 *Jewish translators*, 6 from each tribe of Israel. This is the Scripture that Christ and His Apostles used. In 90AD, however, the *Jewish Council of Jamnia* re-established their Canon of Sacred Books accepting only those which were written in Hebrew, in accord with the Torah, older than Ezra, and written in Palestine. The KJV and subsequent Protestant versions follow *this* newer and revised Jewish Canon.

The question of *conformity* concerns how faithful the translated version is to the original inspired text. This, however, can only be told by the authentic witness (and guardian of the Divine Deposit), the Catholic Church. At the Council of Trent (the council closed in 1563 AD), in answer to a deluge of more or less faulty translations of Holy Scripture, the Catholic Church solemnly defined that the Latin Vulgate version was substantially conformed to the inspired original and that its Canon represented the true list of inspired books. The Church’s reasoning was that the Holy Ghost made use of this version to sanctify centuries of Catholics (before 1500, all Christians were Catholics). It was this same Spirit whom Christ had promised would come upon the Church and would teach it all things and Who would remain with it forever (John 14:16; 16:13). In virtue of this promise the Church has solemnly notified mankind which Bible is true. What worth then are other Bibles?

Let us therefore, always cling to the loving doctrines of Holy Mother Church, for in her care we can never stray from the truth, and will always be guided forward towards greater love and union with God until we enter into those everlasting gates.