Old Testament

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*This article is about the Christian Bible. For the related Jewish text, see*[*Tanakh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh)*.*

|  |
| --- |
| Part of [a series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category%3ABible) on the |
| [**Bible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) |
|  |

The **Old Testament** (abbreviated **OT**) is the first part of [Christian Bibles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible#Christian_Bibles) based primarily upon the [Hebrew Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible) (or [*Tanakh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh)), a collection of ancient religious writings by the [Israelites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelites) believed by many Christians and religious Jews to be the sacred [Word of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorship_of_the_Bible). Its counterpart is the [New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament), the second part of the Christian Bible. The [books that comprise the Old Testament canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Bible) differ between Christian Churches as well as their order and names. The most common [Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism) canon comprises 39 books, the [Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church) canon comprises 46 books, and the canons of the [Eastern Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) and [Oriental Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_Orthodoxy) Churches comprise up to 51 books. The 39 books in common to all the Christian canons corresponds to 24 books of the *Tanakh*, with some differences of order, and there are some differences in text. The additional number reflects the split of texts in the Christian Bibles into separate books, for example, [Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings), [Samuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel) and [Chronicles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles), [Ezra–Nehemiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra%E2%80%93Nehemiah) and the minor prophets into separate books. The books which are part of a Christian Old Testament but which are not part of the Hebrew canon are sometimes described as [deuterocanonical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuterocanonical_books). In general, Protestant bibles do not include deuterocanonical books in its canon, but some versions of [Anglican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican) and [Lutheran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheran) bibles place such books in a separate section called [Apocrypha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_apocrypha).

The Old Testament consists of translations of many distinct books [by various authors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorship_of_the_Bible) produced over a period of centuries. The canon formed in stages, first the [Pentateuch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis) by around 400 BC, then the Prophets during the [Hasmonean dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty) (140-116 BC), and finally the remaining books.

Christians traditionally divide the Old Testament into four sections: (1) the first five books or [Pentateuch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentateuch) ([Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah)); (2) the history books telling the history of the [Israelites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelite), from their [conquest of Canaan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conquest_of_Canaan) to their [defeat and exile in Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_exile); (3) the poetic and "[Wisdom books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapiential_Books)" dealing, in various forms, with questions of good and evil in the world; and (4) the [books of the biblical prophets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevi%27im), warning of the consequences of turning away from God.

Content

*Main articles:*[*Biblical canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon)*and*[*Development of the Old Testament canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Old_Testament_canon)

The Old Testament contains 39 (Protestant) or 46 (Catholic) or more (Orthodox and other) books, divided, very broadly, into the [Pentateuch (Torah)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah), the historical books, the ["wisdom" books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapiential_Books) and the prophets.

**Table**

The table uses the spellings and names present in modern editions of the Bible, such as the Catholic [New American Bible Revised Edition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_American_Bible_Revised_Edition) and the Protestant [Revised Standard Version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised_Standard_Version) and [English Standard Version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Standard_Version). The spelling and names in both the 1609–10 [Douay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douay-Rheims_Bible) Old Testament (and in the 1582 Rheims New Testament) and the 1749 revision by [Bishop Challoner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_Challoner) (the edition currently in print used by many Catholics, and the source of traditional Catholic spellings in English) and in the Septuagint differ from those spellings and names used in modern editions which are derived from the Hebrew Masoretic text.

For the [Orthodox canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_/_Greek_Orthodox_Bible), Septuagint titles are provided in parentheses when these differ from those editions. For the Catholic canon, the Douaic titles are provided in parentheses when these differ from those editions. Likewise, the King James Version references some of these books by the traditional spelling when referring to them in the New Testament, such as "Esaias" (for Isaiah).

In the spirit of [ecumenism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenism) more recent [Catholic translations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Bible#Catholic_English_versions) (e.g. the [New American Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_American_Bible), [Jerusalem Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Bible), and ecumenical translations used by Catholics, such as the [Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised_Standard_Version_Catholic_Edition)) use the same "standardized" (King James Version) spellings and names as [Protestant Bibles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Bible) (e.g. 1 Chronicles as opposed to the Douaic 1 Paralipomenon, 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings instead of 1–4 Kings) in those books which are universally considered canonical, the [protocanonicals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protocanonical_books).

The [Talmud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud) (the Jewish commentary on the scriptures) in [Bava Batra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bava_Batra) 14b gives a different order for the books in *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*. This order is also cited in [Mishneh Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishneh_Torah) Hilchot [Sefer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sefer_%28Hebrew%29) [Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah) 7:15. The order of the books of the Torah is universal through all denominations of Judaism and Christianity.

The disputed books, included in one canon but not in others, are often called the [Biblical apocrypha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_apocrypha), a term that is sometimes used specifically to describe the books in the Catholic and Orthodox canons that are absent from the Jewish Masoretic Text and most modern [Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) Bibles. Catholics, following the [Canon of Trent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_of_Trent) (1546), describe these books as deuterocanonical, while Greek Orthodox Christians, following the Synod, use the traditional name of [*anagignoskomena*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anagignoskomena), meaning "that which is to be read." They are present in a few historic Protestant versions; the German [Luther Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luther_Bible) included such books, as did the English [1611 King James Version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorized_King_James_Version).

Empty table cells indicate that a book is absent from that canon.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [***Tanakh***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh)**(**[**Hebrew Bible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible)**)(24 books) Books in bold are part of the**[***Ketuvim***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketuvim) | [**Protestant**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant)**Old Testament(39 books)** | [**Catholic**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church)**Old Testament(46 books)** | [**Eastern Orthodox**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox)**Old Testament(50 books)** | **Original language** |
| [*Torah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah) | *Pentateuch* or the *Five Books of Moses* |  |
| [Bereishit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) | [Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) | [Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) | [Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis) | Hebrew |
| [Shemot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) | [Exodus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) | [Exodus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) | [Exodus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) | Hebrew |
| [Vayikra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Leviticus) | [Leviticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Leviticus) | [Leviticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Leviticus) | [Leviticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Leviticus) | Hebrew |
| [Bamidbar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Numbers) | [Numbers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Numbers) | [Numbers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Numbers) | [Numbers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Numbers) | Hebrew |
| [Devarim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Deuteronomy) | [Deuteronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Deuteronomy) | [Deuteronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Deuteronomy) | [Deuteronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Deuteronomy) | Hebrew |
| [*Nevi'im*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevi%27im)*(Prophets)* | [*Historical books*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Former_Prophets) |  |
| [Yehoshua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joshua) | [Joshua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joshua) | [Joshua (Josue)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joshua) | [Joshua (Iesous)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joshua) | Hebrew |
| [Shofetim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judges) | [Judges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judges) | [Judges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judges) | [Judges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judges) | Hebrew |
| [**Rut (Ruth)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth)  | [Ruth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth) | [Ruth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth) | [Ruth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth) | Hebrew |
| [Shemuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel) | [1 Samuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel) | [1 Samuel (1 Kings)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)  | [1 Samuel (1 Kingdoms)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)  | Hebrew |
| [2 Samuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel) | [2 Samuel (2 Kings)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)  | [2 Samuel (2 Kingdoms)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)  | Hebrew |
| [Melakhim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) | [1 Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) | [1 Kings (3 Kings)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings)  | [1 Kings (3 Kingdoms)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings)  | Hebrew |
| [2 Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) | [2 Kings (4 Kings)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings)  | [2 Kings (4 Kingdoms)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings)  | Hebrew |
| [**Divrei Hayamim (Chronicles)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles)  | [1 Chronicles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) | [1 Chronicles (1 Paralipomenon)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) | [1 Chronicles (1 Paralipomenon)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) | Hebrew |
| [2 Chronicles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) | [2 Chronicles (2 Paralipomenon)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) | [2 Chronicles (2 Paralipomenon)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) | Hebrew |
|  |  |  | [1 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Esdras)  | Hebrew |
| [**Ezra–Nehemiah**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra%E2%80%93Nehemiah) | [Ezra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezra) | [Ezra (1 Esdras)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezra) | [Ezra (2 Esdras)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezra)  | Hebrew and Aramaic |
| [Nehemiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Nehemiah) | [Nehemiah (2 Esdras)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Nehemiah) | [Nehemiah (2 Esdras)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Nehemiah)  | Hebrew |
|  |  | [Tobit (Tobias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit) | [Tobit (Tobias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit)  | Aramaic (and Hebrew?) |
| [Judith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judith) | [Judith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judith) | Hebrew |
| [**Esther**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Esther) | [Esther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Esther) | [Esther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Esther) | [Esther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Esther) | Hebrew |
|  |  | [1 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Maccabees) (1 Machabees)  | [1 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Maccabees) | Hebrew |
| [2 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Maccabees) (2 Machabees)  | [2 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Maccabees) | Greek |
|  | [3 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3_Maccabees) | Greek |
| [3 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Esdras) | Greek? |
| [4 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4_Maccabees) | Greek |
| [*Ketuvim*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketuvim)*(Writings)* | [*Wisdom books*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sapiential_books) |  |
| [**Iyov (Job)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Job)  | [Job](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Job) | [Job](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Job) | [Job](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Job) | Hebrew |
| [**Tehillim (Psalms)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms)  | [Psalms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms) | [Psalms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms) | [Psalms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms) | Hebrew |
|  |  |  | [Prayer of Manasseh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Manasseh) | Greek |
| [**Mishlei (Proverbs)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Proverbs)  | [Proverbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Proverbs) | [Proverbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Proverbs) | [Proverbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Proverbs) | Hebrew |
| [**Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastes)  | [Ecclesiastes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastes) | [Ecclesiastes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastes) | [Ecclesiastes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastes) | Hebrew |
| [**Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_of_Songs)  | [Song of Solomon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_of_Solomon) | [Song of Songs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_of_Songs) (Canticle of Canticles) | [Song of Songs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_of_Songs) (Aisma Aismaton) | Hebrew |
|  |  | [Wisdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Wisdom) | [Wisdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Wisdom) | Greek |
| [Sirach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirach) (Ecclesiasticus) | [Sirach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirach) | Hebrew |
| [*Nevi'im*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevi%27im)*(Latter Prophets)* | [*Major prophets*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_prophet) |  |
| [Yeshayahu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah) | [Isaiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah) | [Isaiah (Isaias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah) | [Isaiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah) | Hebrew |
| [Yirmeyahu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jeremiah) | [Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jeremiah) | [Jeremiah (Jeremias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jeremiah) | [Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jeremiah) | Hebrew |
| [**Eikhah (Lamentations)**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Lamentations)  | [Lamentations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Lamentations) | [Lamentations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Lamentations) | [Lamentations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Lamentations) | Hebrew |
|  |  | [Baruch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Baruch) | [Baruch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Baruch)  | Hebrew |
| [Letter of Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_of_Jeremiah)  | Greek (majority view)  |
| [Yekhezqel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) | [Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) | [Ezekiel (Ezechiel)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) | [Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) | Hebrew |
| [**Daniel**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) | [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) | [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) | [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) | Hebrew and Aramaic |
|  | [*Twelve Minor Prophets*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_Minor_Prophets) |  |
| [The Twelve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_Minor_Prophets)or*Trei Asar* | [Hosea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Hosea) | [Hosea (Osee)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Hosea) | [Hosea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Hosea) | Hebrew |
| [Joel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joel) | [Joel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joel) | [Joel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joel) | Hebrew |
| [Amos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Amos) | [Amos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Amos) | [Amos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Amos) | Hebrew |
| [Obadiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Obadiah) | [Obadiah (Abdias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Obadiah) | [Obadiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Obadiah) | Hebrew |
| [Jonah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jonah) | [Jonah (Jonas)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jonah) | [Jonah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jonah) | Hebrew |
| [Micah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Micah) | [Micah (Micheas)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Micah) | [Micah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Micah) | Hebrew |
| [Nahum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Nahum) | [Nahum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Nahum) | [Nahum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Nahum) | Hebrew |
| [Habakkuk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Habakkuk) | [Habakkuk (Habacuc)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Habakkuk) | [Habakkuk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Habakkuk) | Hebrew |
| [Zephaniah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zephaniah) | [Zephaniah (Sophonias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zephaniah) | [Zephaniah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zephaniah) | Hebrew |
| [Haggai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Haggai) | [Haggai (Aggeus)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Haggai) | [Haggai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Haggai) | Hebrew |
| [Zechariah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zechariah) | [Zechariah (Zacharias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zechariah) | [Zechariah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zechariah) | Hebrew |
| [Malachi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Malachi) | [Malachi (Malachias)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Malachi) | [Malachi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Malachi) | Hebrew |

Several of the books in the Eastern Orthodox canon are also found in the appendix to the Latin Vulgate, formerly the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

|  |
| --- |
| *Books in the Appendix to the*[*Vulgate*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate)*Bible* |
| **Name in Vulgate** | **Name in Eastern Orthodox use** |
| [3 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Esdras) | [1 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Esdras) |
| [4 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Esdras) |  |
| [Prayer of Manasseh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Manasseh) | [Prayer of Manasseh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Manasseh) |
| [Psalm of David when he slew Goliath (Psalm 151)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm_151) | [Psalm 151](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalm_151) |

Composition

The first five books – [Genesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis), [Exodus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus), [Leviticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leviticus), [book of Numbers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Numbers) and [Deuteronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuteronomy) – reached their present form in the [Persian period (538–332 BC)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yehud_Medinata), and their authors were the elite of exilic returnees who controlled the [Temple at that time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple). The books of [Joshua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joshua), [Judges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judges), [Samuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel) and [Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) follow, forming a history of Israel from the [Conquest of Canaan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conquest_of_Canaan) to the [Siege of Jerusalem c. 587 BC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_%28587_BC%29). There is a broad consensus among scholars that these originated as a single work (the so-called "[Deuteronomistic history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuteronomistic_history)") during the [Babylonian exile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_exile) of the 6th century BC. The two [Books of Chronicles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Chronicles) cover much the same material as the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic history and probably date from the 4th century BC. Chronicles, and [Ezra–Nehemiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra%E2%80%93Nehemiah), were probably finished during the 3rd century BC. Catholic and Orthodox Old Testaments contain two (Catholic Old Testament) to four (Orthodox) [Books of Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Maccabees), written in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC.

These history books make up around half the total content of the Old Testament. Of the remainder, the books of the various prophets – [Isaiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah), [Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jeremiah), [Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel), [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) and the twelve "[minor prophets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minor_prophets)" – were written between the 8th and 6th centuries BC, with the exceptions of [Jonah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jonah) and [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel), which were written much later. The "wisdom" books –[Job](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Job), [Proverbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Proverbs), [Ecclesiastes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ecclesiastes), [Psalms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Psalms), [Song of Solomon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Song_of_Solomon) – have various dates: Proverbs possibly was completed by the Hellenistic time (332-198 BC), though containing much older material as well; Job completed by the 6th Century BC; Ecclesiastes by the 3rd Century BC.

Themes

God is consistently depicted as the one who created or [put into order](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genesis_creation_narrative) the world and guides its history. Although the God of the Old Testament is not consistently presented as [the only God who exists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotheism), he is always depicted as [the only God whom Israel is to worship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monolatrism), or the one "true God", that only the [Jehovah of Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahweh) is Almighty, and both Jews and Christians have always interpreted the Bible (both the "Old" and "New" Testaments) as an affirmation of the oneness of Almighty God.

The Old Testament stresses the special relationship between God and his [chosen people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chosen_people), Israel, but includes instructions for [proselytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proselyte) as well. This relationship is expressed in the [biblical covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_covenant) (contract) between the two, received by Moses. The law codes in books such as [Exodus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Exodus) and especially [Deuteronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuteronomy) are the terms of the contract: Israel swears faithfulness to [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetragrammaton), and God swears to be Israel's special protector and supporter.

Further themes in the Old Testament include [salvation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation), [redemption](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redemption_%28theology%29), [divine judgment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_judgment), obedience and disobedience, [faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith) and faithfulness, among others. Throughout there is a strong emphasis on [ethics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics) and [ritual purity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purity), both of which God demands, although some of the prophets and wisdom writers seem to question this, arguing that God demands [social justice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_justice) above purity, and perhaps does not even care about purity at all. The Old Testament's moral code enjoins fairness, intervention on behalf of the vulnerable, and the duty of those in power to administer justice righteously. It forbids murder, bribery and corruption, deceitful trading, and many [sexual misdemeanors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porneia). All morality is traced back to God, who is the source of all goodness.

The [problem of evil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Problem_of_evil) plays a large part in the Old Testament. The problem the Old Testament authors faced was that a good God must have had just reason for bringing disaster (meaning notably, but not only, the [Babylonian exile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_exile)) upon his people. The theme is played out, with many variations, in books as different as the histories of Kings and Chronicles, the prophets like Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and in the wisdom books like Job and Ecclesiastes.

Formation

*Main articles:*[*Books of the Bible*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Bible)*and*[*Biblical canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon)

*See also:*[*Development of the Hebrew Bible canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Hebrew_Bible_canon)*,*[*Development of the Old Testament canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Old_Testament_canon)*,*[*Septuagint*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint)*, and*[*Books of the Latin Vulgate*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Latin_Vulgate)

The interrelationship between various significant ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament, according to the [*Encyclopaedia Biblica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopaedia_Biblica) (1903). Some manuscripts are identified by their [siglum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scribal_abbreviation). LXX here denotes the original Septuagint.

The process by which scriptures became canons and Bibles was a long one, and its complexities account for the many different Old Testaments which exist today. Timothy H. Lim, a professor of Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism at the [University of Edinburgh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Edinburgh), identifies the Old Testament as "a collection of authoritative texts of apparently divine origin that went through a human process of writing and editing." He states that it is not a magical book, nor was it literally written by [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Judaism) and passed to mankind. By about the 5th century BC Jews saw the five books of the [Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah) (the Old Testament Pentateuch) as having authoritative status; by the 2nd century BC the Prophets had a similar status, although without quite the same level of respect as the Torah; beyond that, the Jewish scriptures were fluid, with different groups seeing authority in different books.

**Greek**

*See also:*[*Septuagint*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint)*and*[*Masoretic Text*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text)

Hebrew texts commenced to be translated into Greek in [Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria) in about 280 and continued until about 130 BC. These early Greek translations – supposedly commissioned by [Ptolemy Philadelphus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy_II) – were called the [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) (Latin: "Seventy") from the supposed number of translators involved (hence its abbreviation "[LXX](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LXX)"). This Septuagint remains the basis of the Old Testament in the [Eastern Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodoxy).

It varies in many places from the [Masoretic Text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text) and includes numerous books no longer considered canonical in some traditions: 1 and 2[Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esdras), [Judith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith), [Tobit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit), 3 and 4 [Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Maccabees), the [Book of Wisdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Wisdom), [Sirach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirach), and [Baruch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Baruch). Early modern [Biblical criticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_criticism) typically explained these variations as intentional or ignorant corruptions by the Alexandrian scholars, but most recent scholarship holds it is simply based on early source texts differing from those later used by the [Masoretes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretes) in their work.

The Septuagint was originally used by [Hellenized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenization) Jews whose knowledge of [Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koine_Greek) was better than Hebrew. But the texts came to be used predominantly by gentile converts to Christianity and by the early Church as its scripture, Greek being the *lingua franca* of the early Church. The three most acclaimed early interpreters were [Aquila of Sinope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquila_of_Sinope), [Symmachus the Ebionite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symmachus_the_Ebionite), and [Theodotion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodotion); in his [Hexapla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla), [Origen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origen) placed his edition of the Hebrew text beside [its transcription in Greek letters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secunda_%28Hexapla%29) and four parallel translations: Aquila's, Symmachus's, the Septuagint's, and Theodotion's. The so-called "fifth" and "sixth editions" were two other Greek translations supposedly miraculously discovered by students outside the towns of [Jericho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jericho) and [Nicopolis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicopolis): these were added to Origen's Octapla.

In 331, [Constantine I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_I_and_Christianity) commissioned [Eusebius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius) to deliver [fifty Bibles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifty_Bibles_of_Constantine) for the [Church of Constantinople](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Constantinople). [Athanasius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athanasius) recorded [Alexandrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_centers_of_Christianity#Alexandria) scribes around 340 preparing Bibles for [Constans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constans). Little else is known, though there is plenty of speculation. For example, it is speculated that this may have provided motivation for canon lists, and that [Codex Vaticanus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Vaticanus) and [Codex Sinaiticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sinaiticus) are examples of these Bibles. Together with the [Peshitta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peshitta) and [Codex Alexandrinus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Alexandrinus), these are the earliest extant Christian Bibles. There is no evidence among the [canons of the First Council of Nicaea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea#The_biblical_canon) of any determination on the canon, however, [Jerome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome) (347–420), in his *Prologue to Judith*, makes the claim that the [Book of Judith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judith) was "found by the Nicene Council to have been counted among the number of the Sacred Scriptures".

**Latin**

*See also:*[*Deuterocanonical books*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuterocanonical_books)*and*[*Vulgate*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate)

In [Western Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Christianity) or Christianity in the [Western half of the Roman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire), Latin had displaced Greek as the common language of the early Christians, and in 382 AD Pope [Damasus I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damasus_I) – commissioned [Jerome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome), the leading scholar of the day, to produce an updated Latin bible to replace the [Vetus Latina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetus_Latina), which was a Latin translation of the Septuagint. Jerome's work, called the [Vulgate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate), was a direct translation from Hebrew, since he argued for the superiority of [the Hebrew texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Hebrew_Bible_canon) in correcting the Septuagint on both philological and theological grounds. His Vulgate Old Testament became the standard bible used in the Western Church, specifically as the [Sixto-Clementine Vulgate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixto-Clementine_Vulgate), while the [Churches in the East](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Christianity) continued, and still continue, to use the Septuagint.

Jerome, however, in the [Vulgate's prologues](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#Prologues) describes some portions of books in the Septuagint not found in the Hebrew Bible as being non-[canonical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon) (he called them [*apocrypha*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_apocrypha)); for [*Baruch*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Baruch), he mentions by name in his *Prologue to Jeremiah* and notes that it is neither read nor held among the Hebrews, but does not explicitly call it apocryphal or "not in the canon". The [Synod of Hippo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synod_of_Hippo) (in 393), followed by the [Councils of Carthage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Councils_of_Carthage) (in 397 and 419), may be the first council that explicitly accepted the first canon which includes the books that did not appear in the [Hebrew Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible); the councils were under significant influence of [Augustine of Hippo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo), who regarded the canon as already closed.

**Protestant**

In the 16th, century the Protestant reformers sided with Jerome; yet although most Protestant Bibles now have only those books that appear in the Hebrew Bible, they have them in the order of the Greek Bible.

Rome then officially adopted a canon, the [Canon of Trent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_of_Trent), which is seen as following Augustine's Carthaginian Councils or the [Council of Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Rome), and includes most, but not all, of the Septuagint ([3 Ezra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3_Ezra) and 3 and 4 [Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maccabees) are excluded); the [Anglicans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican) after the [English Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Civil_War) adopted a compromise position, restoring the [39 Articles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/39_Articles) and keeping the extra books that were excluded by the [Westminster Confession of Faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith), but only for private study and for [reading in churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_Liturgy), while [Lutherans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheran) kept them for private study, gathered in an appendix as [Biblical Apocrypha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Apocrypha).

**Other versions**

While the Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions of the Hebrew Bible are the best known Old Testaments, there were others. At much the same time as the Septuagint was being produced, translations were being made into Aramaic, the language of Jews living in Palestine and the Near East and likely the [language of Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_of_Jesus): these are called the Aramaic [Targums](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Targum), from a word meaning "translation", and were used to help Jewish congregations understand their scriptures.

For Aramaic Christians there was a [Syriac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_language) translation of the Hebrew Bible called the [Peshitta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peshitta), as well as versions in [Coptic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptic_language) (the everyday language of Egypt in the first Christian centuries, descended from ancient Egyptian), [Ethiopic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopic) (for use in the Ethiopian church, one of the oldest Christian churches), [Armenian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_people) (Armenia was the first to adopt Christianity as its official religion), and [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic).

Literary evaluations

The Old Testament is considered one of the most important and influential works of literature in [world literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_literature), and has provided inspiration for writers (both religious and secular) throughout subsequent history. In 1886, [Friedrich Nietzsche](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche) wrote: "In the Jewish Old Testament, there are men, things and speeches in so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to compare to it. One stands with awe and reverence before these tremendous remnants of what man once was... The taste for the Old Testament is a touchstone of "greatness" and "smallness". To have glued this New Testament, a kind of rococo of taste in every respect, to the Old Testament to form one book... that is perhaps the greatest audacity and sin against the spirit that Europe has on its conscience."

Christian theology

*Main article:*[*Christian views on the Old Covenant*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_views_on_the_Old_Covenant)

Christianity is based on the belief that the [historical Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_Jesus) is also the [Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ), as in the [Confession of Peter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confession_of_Peter). This belief is in turn based on Jewish understandings of the meaning of the Hebrew term [messiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah), which, like the Greek "Christ", means "anointed". In the Hebrew Scriptures it describes a king anointed with oil on his accession to the throne: he becomes "The LORD's anointed" or [Yahweh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahweh)'s Anointed. By the time of Jesus, some Jews expected that a flesh and blood descendant of David (the "[Son of David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davidic_line)") would come to establish a real Jewish kingdom in Jerusalem, instead of the [Roman province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iudaea_province).

Others stressed the [Son of Man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_Man), a distinctly other-worldly figure who would appear as a [judge at the end of time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_judgment); and some harmonized the two by expecting a this-worldly messianic kingdom which would last for a set period and be followed by the other-worldly age or [World to Come](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_to_Come). Some thought the Messiah was already present, but unrecognized due to Israel's sins; some thought that the Messiah would be announced by a fore-runner, probably [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah) (as promised by the prophet Malachi, whose book now ends the Old Testament and precedes [Mark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark)'s account of [John the Baptist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_the_Baptist)). None predicted a Messiah who suffers and dies for the sins of all the people. The story of Jesus' death therefore involved a profound shift in meaning from the tradition of the Old Testament.

The name "Old Testament" reflects Christianity's understanding of itself as the [fulfillment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism) of Jeremiah's prophecy of a [New Covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Covenant) (which is similar to "testament" and often conflated) to replace the existing [covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_%28biblical%29) between God and Israel (Jeremiah 31:31). The emphasis, however, has shifted from Judaism's understanding of the covenant as a racially or tribally-based contract between God and Jews to one between God and any person of faith who is "in Christ".

See also

* [Abrogation of Old Covenant laws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrogation_of_Old_Covenant_laws)
* [Biblical and Quranic narratives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_and_Quranic_narratives)
* [Book of Job in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Job_in_Byzantine_illuminated_manuscripts)
* [Books of the Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Bible)
* [Covenant (biblical)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_%28biblical%29)
* [Expounding of the Law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expounding_of_the_Law)
* [Timeline of Genesis patriarchs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Genesis_patriarchs)
* [Law and Gospel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_and_Gospel)
* [List of ancient legal codes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ancient_legal_codes)
* [List of Hebrew Bible manuscripts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Hebrew_Bible_manuscripts)
* [Marcion of Sinope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcion_of_Sinope)
* [Non-canonical books referenced in the Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-canonical_books_referenced_in_the_Bible)
* [Quotations from the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quotations_from_the_Hebrew_Bible_in_the_New_Testament)
* [Supersessionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism)

This page was last modified on 16 April 2017, at 09:23.