

# Glossary – Timeline of the Bible

*Expert knowledge means success*



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## Introduction

Although the Bible, a collection of sacred texts or scripture, is the central book in Western culture, it's extraordinary that there is no proper history of it. Along with the Codex Vaticanus<sup>1</sup>, the Codex Sinaiticus<sup>2</sup> is considered the oldest known Bible in the world. The Codex Sinaiticus was more than 1,460 pages long and measured 16in by 14in. It was written by a number of people around the time of Constantine the Great in the 4th Century. The manuscript contains the Christian Bible in Greek, including the oldest complete copy of the New Testament. The hand-written text is in Greek. The New Testament appears in the original vernacular language (koine) and the Old Testament in the version, known as the Septuagint, that was adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians.<sup>3</sup>

The entire Bible was first put together in Greek. The Old Testament came from the Septuagint, a Jewish translation of the Hebrew scriptures and related writings into Greek before the time of Christ. The New Testament documents were all composed in Greek, although Aramaic materials may have been used in doing so.

Greek was the language of the eastern Roman Empire, the area where Christianity first emerged. The western Roman Empire mainly spoke Latin.

The Greek bible was translated into Latin by various people, with varying quality, until Jerome<sup>4</sup> translated major portions of the Bible into Latin. He began in 382 AD by

correcting the existing Latin language version of the New Testament, commonly referred to as the Vetus Latina. By 390 AD, he turned to translating the Hebrew Bible from the original Hebrew, having previously translated portions from the Septuagint which came from Alexandria.

A timeline of events recorded in the Bible, based on traditionally accepted timeframes and general consensus of a variety of sources can be found at:

<https://biblehub.com/timeline/#sources>. The sources include Wilmington's Guide to the Bible, A Survey of Israel's History (Wood), The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings (Thiele), ESV Study Bible, The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, and Easton's Bible Dictionary.



IMAGE ATTRIBUTION (FRONT COVER)

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IMAGE ATTRIBUTION

"File:Dead Sea Scrolls Pot and the Copper Scroll.jpg" by Eagletennis is licensed under CC BY 2.5

<sup>1</sup> The Codex Vaticanus is regarded as the oldest extant manuscript of the Greek Bible, one of the four great uncial codices. The Codex is named after its place of conservation in the Vatican Library, where it has been kept since at least the 15th century. It is written on 759 leaves of vellum in uncial letters and has been dated paleographically to the 4th century.

<sup>2</sup> The literal meaning of 'Codex Sinaiticus' is the Sinai Book. The word 'Sinaiticus' comes from the fact that the Codex was preserved for many centuries at St Catherine's Monastery near the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> Source:

<http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/codex/>

<sup>4</sup> Jerome was a Latin Catholic priest, confessor, theologian and historian, commonly known as Saint Jerome.

## Timeline of the Bible:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creation - B.C. 2000</b> - Originally, the earliest Scriptures are handed down from generation to generation orally.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa B.C. 2000-1500</b> - The book of Job, perhaps the oldest book of the Bible, is written.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa B.C. 1500-1400</b> - The stone tablets of the Ten Commandments are given to Moses at Mount Sinai and later stored in the Ark of the Covenant.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa B.C. 1400-400</b> - The manuscripts comprising the original Hebrew Bible (39 Old Testament books) are completed. The Book of the Law is kept in the tabernacle and later in the Temple beside the Ark of the Covenant.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa B.C. 300</b> - All of the original Old Testament Hebrew books have been written, collected, and recognised as official, canonical books.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa B.C. 250-200</b> - The Septuagint, a popular Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (39 Old Testament books), is produced. The 14 books of the Apocrypha are also included.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 45-100</b> - Original 27 books of the Greek New Testament are written.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 140-150</b> - Marcion of Sinope's heretical "New Testament" prompted Orthodox Christians to establish a New Testament canon.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 200</b> - The Jewish Mishnah, the Oral Torah, is first recorded.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 240</b> - Origen compiles the Hexapla, a six-columned parallel of Greek and Hebrew texts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 305-310</b> - Lucian of Antioch's Greek New Testament text becomes the basis for the Textus Receptus.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 312</b> - Codex Vaticanus is possibly among the original 50 copies of the Bible ordered by Emperor Constantine. It is eventually kept in the Vatican Library in Rome.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 367</b> - Athanasius of Alexandria identifies the complete New Testament canon (27 books) for the first time.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 382-384</b> - Saint Jerome translates the New Testament from original Greek into Latin. This translation becomes part of the Latin Vulgate manuscript.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 397</b> - Third Synod of Carthage approves the New Testament canon (27 books).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 390-405</b> - Saint Jerome translates the Hebrew Bible into Latin and completes the Latin Vulgate manuscript. It includes the 39 Old Testament books, 27 New Testament books, and 14 Apocrypha books.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 500</b> - By now the Scriptures have been translated into multiple languages, not limited to but including an Egyptian version (Codex Alexandrinus), a Coptic version, an Ethiopic translation, a Gothic version (Codex Argenteus), and an Armenian version. Some consider the Armenian to be the most beautiful and accurate of all ancient translations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 600</b> - The Roman Catholic Church declares Latin as the only language for Scripture.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 680</b> - Caedmon, English poet and monk, renders Bible books and stories into Anglo Saxon poetry and song.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 735</b> - Bede, English historian and monk, translates the Gospels into Anglo Saxon.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 775</b> - The Book of Kells, a richly decorated manuscript containing the Gospels and other writings, is completed by Celtic monks in Ireland.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 865</b> - Saints Cyril and Methodius begin translating the Bible into Old Church Slavonic.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 950</b> - The Lindisfarne Gospels manuscript is translated into Old English.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 995-1010</b> - Aelfric, an English abbot, translates parts of Scripture into Old English.</li> </ul>



### IMAGE ATTRIBUTION

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1205</b> - Stephen Langton, theology professor and later Archbishop of Canterbury, creates the first chapter divisions in the books of the Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1229</b> - Council of Toulouse strictly forbids and prohibits lay people from owning a Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1240</b> - French Cardinal Hugh of Saint Cher publishes the first Latin Bible with the chapter divisions that still exist today.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1325</b> - English hermit and poet, Richard Rolle de Hampole, and English poet William Shoreham translate the Psalms into metrical verse.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Circa A.D. 1330</b> - Rabbi Solomon ben Ismael first places chapter divisions in the margins of the Hebrew Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1381-1382</b> - John Wycliffe and associates, in defiance of the organised Church, believing that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, begin to translate and produce the first handwritten manuscripts of the entire Bible in English. These include the 39 Old Testament books, 27 New Testament books, and 14 Apocrypha books.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1388</b> - John Purvey revises Wycliffe's Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1415</b> - 31 years after Wycliffe's death, the Council of Constance charges him with more than 260 counts of heresy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1428</b> - 44 years after Wycliffe's death, church officials dig up his bones, burn them, and scatter the ashes on Swift River.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1455</b> - After the invention of the printing press in Germany, Johannes Gutenberg produces the first printed Bible, the Gutenberg Bible, in the Latin Vulgate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1516</b> - Desiderius Erasmus produces a Greek New Testament, a forerunner to the Textus Receptus.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1517</b> - Daniel Bomberg's Rabbinic Bible contains the first printed Hebrew version (Masoretic text) with chapter divisions.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1522</b> - Martin Luther translates and publishes the New Testament for the first time into German from the 1516 Erasmus version.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1524</b> - Bomberg prints a</li> </ul>

<p>second edition Masoretic text prepared by Jacob ben Chayim.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1525</b> - William Tyndale produces the first translation of the New Testament from Greek into English.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1527</b> - Erasmus publishes a fourth edition Greek-Latin translation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1530</b> - Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples completes the first French language translation of the entire Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1535</b> - Myles Coverdale's Bible completes Tyndale's work, producing the first complete printed Bible in the English language. It includes the 39 Old Testament books, 27 New Testament books, and 14 Apocrypha books.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1536</b> - Martin Luther translates the Old Testament into the commonly-spoken dialect of the German people, completing his translation of the entire Bible in German.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1536</b> - Tyndale is condemned as a heretic, strangled, and burned at the stake.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1537</b> - The Matthew Bible (commonly known as the Matthew-Tyndale Bible), a second complete printed English translation, is published, combining the works of Tyndale, Coverdale and John Rogers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1539</b> - The Great Bible, the first English Bible authorised for public use, is printed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1546</b> - Roman Catholic Council of Trent declares the Vulgate as the exclusive Latin authority for the Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1553</b> - Robert Estienne publishes a French Bible with chapter and verse divisions. This system of numbering becomes widely accepted and is still found in most Bible's today.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1560</b> - The Geneva Bible is printed in Geneva, Switzerland. It is translated by English refugees and published by John Calvin's brother-in-law, William Whittingham. The Geneva Bible is the first English Bible to add numbered verses to the chapters. It becomes the Bible of the Protestant Reformation, more popular than the 1611 King James Version for decades after its original release.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1568</b> - The Bishop's Bible, a revision of the Great Bible, is introduced in England to compete with the popular but "inflammatory toward the institutional Church" Geneva Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1582</b> - Dropping its 1,000-year-old Latin-only policy, the Church of Rome produces the first English Catholic Bible, the Rheims New Testament, from the Latin Vulgate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1592</b> - The Clementine Vulgate (authorised by Pope Clementine VIII), a revised version of the Latin Vulgate, becomes the authoritative Bible of the Catholic Church.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1609</b> - The Douay Old Testament is translated into English by the Church of Rome, to complete the combined Douay-Rheims Version.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1611</b> - The King James Version, also called the "Authorised Version" of the Bible is published. It is said to be the most printed book in the history of the world, with more than one billion copies in print.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1663</b> - John Eliot's Algonquin Bible is the first Bible printed in America, not in English, but in the native Algonquin Indian language.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1782</b> - Robert Aitken's Bible is the first English language (KJV) Bible printed in America.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1790</b> - Matthew Carey publishes a Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims Version English Bible in America.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1790</b> - William Young prints the first pocket-sized "school edition" King James Version Bible in America.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1791</b> - The Isaac Collins Bible, the first family Bible (KJV), is printed in USA.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1791</b> - Isaiah Thomas prints the first illustrated Bible (KJV) in America.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1808</b> - Jane Aitken (daughter of Robert Aitken), is the first woman to</li> </ul>

<p>print a Bible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1833</b> - Noah Webster, after publishing his famous dictionary, releases his own revised edition of the King James Bible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1841</b> - The English Hexapla New Testament, a comparison of the original Greek language and six important English translations, is produced.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1844</b> - The Codex Sinaiticus, a handwritten Koine Greek manuscript of both Old and New Testament texts dating back to the fourth century, is rediscovered by German Bible scholar Konstantin Von Tischendorf in the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1881-1885</b> - The King James Bible is revised and published as the Revised Version (RV) in England.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1901</b> - The American Standard Version, the first major American revision of the King James Version, is published.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1946-1952</b> - The Revised Standard Version is published.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1947-1956</b> - The Dead Sea Scrolls are discovered.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1971</b> - The New American Standard Bible (NASB) is published.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1973</b> - The New International Version (NIV) is published.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1982</b> - The New King James Version (NKJV) is published.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1986</b> - The discovery of the Silver Scrolls, believed to be the oldest Bible text ever, is announced. They were found three years earlier in the Old City of Jerusalem by Gabriel Barkay of Tel Aviv University.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.D. 1996</b> - The New Living Translation (NLT) is published.</li> </ul>

## Interesting Facts

Contrary to popular belief, the books of the Bible that are known and read today are not the same as the original manuscripts of any of the books.

The Bible was written over a span of 1500 years, by 40 writers. Unlike other religious writings, the Bible reads as a factual news account of real events, places, people, and dialogue. Historians and archaeologists have repeatedly confirmed its authenticity.<sup>5</sup>

Of all the books that have been edited out of the Old Testament, the **Book of Tobit** stands out for the tale it tells. Initially, this story of a marriage that helped capture a demon was left out of the Biblical canon because of its late authorship. Recently, however, scholars have its omission was because Raguel, the bride's father, wrote the story's marriage document instead of the bridegroom, as was required by Jewish rabbinical law.

**The Bible is the most widely read book** in the history of the world, more than any other book, with 3.9 billion copies sold over the last 50 years. But over the past 2,000 years, this sacred text has changed a great deal. Because in the first 100 to 200 years, copies of the Bible were made by hand... and not by professionals or machine, it has led to many errors, omissions, and changes over the years. Both before and after the 1611 edition of the King James Version of the Bible (its first printing) it has changed many times. For example, in 1611, the English alphabet did not contain the letter j (consistent with Latin), and the name of Jesus was rendered Iesus.

The **Bible's Old Testament is thought to have been first written down in an ancient form of Hebrew**, originating in the 6th century B.C., because Hebrew writing was thought to stretch back no further.

<sup>5</sup> See:

<https://www.everystudent.com/features/bible.html>

## Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

### Acknowledgement

The Bible Timeline was compiled by Mary Fairchild - see:  
<https://www.learnreligions.com/history-of-the-bible-timeline-700157>

Mary is a full-time Christian minister, writer, and editor of two Christian anthologies, including "Stories of Cavalry." Read more about her at:  
<https://www.learnreligions.com/mary-fairchild-699909>

Sources for the Bible Timeline are:  
Willmington's Bible Handbook;  
[www.greatsite.com](http://www.greatsite.com); Crossway; Bible Museum;  
Biblica; Christianity Today; and Theopedia.

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