

How did we get the  
Bible?

# Bible Overview

Tests for  
inclusion

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Central to corporate worship and  
reading throughout the church

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Associated with ancient writers /  
prophets / apostles

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Inspired and in harmony with the  
whole of scripture

OT  
Manuscripts

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Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  
Composed 100-200 AD,  
oldest copy 900-1000 AD

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Septuagint (Greek)  
Composed 300-200 BC,  
oldest copy 300-500 AD

# NT Manuscripts

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The New Testament has been preserved in more manuscripts than any other ancient work of literature, with over 5,800 complete or fragmented Greek manuscripts catalogued, 10,000 Latin manuscripts and 9,300 manuscripts in various other ancient languages.

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The earliest manuscript of a New Testament text is a business-card-sized fragment from the Gospel of John, which may be as early as the first half of the 2nd century. The first complete copies of single New Testament books appear around 200, and the earliest complete copy of the New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, dates to the 4th century

# Trivia

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The chapters in the bible were only added after 1000 years, with verses added after that.

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Stephen Langton and his students at University of Paris in the early 1200's worked on creating the chapters, publishing French bibles around 1231.

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Verses didn't come until Robert Estienne with French bibles in the 1550's. Until then, people (even Jesus) referred to scripture like "as in the passage about the bush", and in Hebrews 4:4, "For he has somewhere spoken of the 7th day in this way, 'God rested on the 7th day ...

What Does  
Biblical  
Authority  
Mean?  
(via N.T.  
Wright)

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The authority of ***STORY***.

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Imagine seeing a play in five acts –  
only the fifth act you have to write  
and act yourself.

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# What Does Biblical Authority Mean? (via N.T. Wright)

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This 'authority' of the first four acts would not consist in an implicit command that the actors should repeat the earlier parts of the play over and over again. It would consist in the fact of an as yet unfinished drama, which contained its own impetus, its own forward movement, which demanded to be concluded in the proper manner but which required of the actors a responsible entering in to the story as it stood, in order first to understand how the threads could appropriately be drawn together, and then to put that understanding into effect by speaking and acting with both innovation and consistency.

# The Five Acts



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Creation

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The Fall

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Israel and God's saving acts

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Jesus

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Act V – the Church in the world

Inspired, and  
Inspiration  
for us

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The Bible, then, is designed to function through human beings, through the church, through people who, living still by the Spirit, have their life molded by this Spirit-inspired book. What for? As Jesus said in John 20, 'As the Father sent me, even so I send you'. He sends the church into the world, in other words, to be and do for the world what he was and did for Israel.

Inspired, and  
Inspiration  
for us

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God desires and longs to inspire by reawakening each generation of people to the freshness of God's covenant, and hence summoning them to fresh covenant tasks. The phrase 'authority of scripture', therefore, is a sort of shorthand for the fact that the creator and covenant God uses this book as the means of equipping and calling the church for these tasks.

# Hebrew Bible vs. Christian Bible

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## The Old Testament Order in the Hebrew Bible

### Law (Torah)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

### Prophets (Nevi'im)

Joshua
Judges
Samuel
Kings

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
The Twelve (Hosea–Malachi)

### Writings (Kethuvim)

Psalms
Proverbs
Job

Ruth
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes
Lamentations
Esther

Daniel
Ezra–Nehemiah
Chronicles

## Order in the English Bible

### Pentateuch or Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

### Historical Books

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 & 2 Samuel
1 & 2 Kings
1 & 2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

### Poetic Books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs

### Prophetic Books

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

THE OLD TESTAMENT | 39 BOOKS

NARRATIVE	WRITINGS	PROPHECY
PENTATEUCH*	JOB	MAJOR
GENESIS	PSALMS	ISAIAH
EXODUS	PROVERBS	JEREMIAH
LEVITICUS	ECCLESIASTES	EZEKIEL
NUMBERS	SONG OF SONGS	DANIEL
DEUTERONOMY	LAMENTATIONS	MINOR
		HOSEA
JOSHUA		JUDGES
JUDGES		AMOS
RUTH		OBADIAH
1&2 SAMUEL		JONAH
1&2 KINGS		MICAH
1&2 CHRONICLES		NAHUM
EZRA, NEHEMIAH		HABAKUK
ESTHER		ZEPHANIAH
		HAGGAI
		ZECCHARIAH
		MALACHI

THE NEW TESTAMENT | 27 BOOKS

GOSPELS	NARRATIVE	LETTERS	PROPHECY/LETTER
MATTHEW		PAUL→CHURCHES	REVELATION
MARK		ROMANS	
LUKE	ACTS	1 CORINTHIANS	
JOHN		2 CORINTHIANS	
		GALATIANS	
		EPHESIANS	
		PHILIPPIANS	
		COLLOSSIANS	
		1 THESSALONIANS	
		2 THESSALONIANS	
		PAUL→INDIVIDUALS	
		1 TIMOTHY	
		2 TIMOTHY	
		TITUS	
		PHILEMON	
		GENERAL	
		HEBREWS	
		JAMES	
		1 PETER	
		2 PETER	
		1 JOHN	
		2 JOHN	
		3 JOHN	
		JUDE	

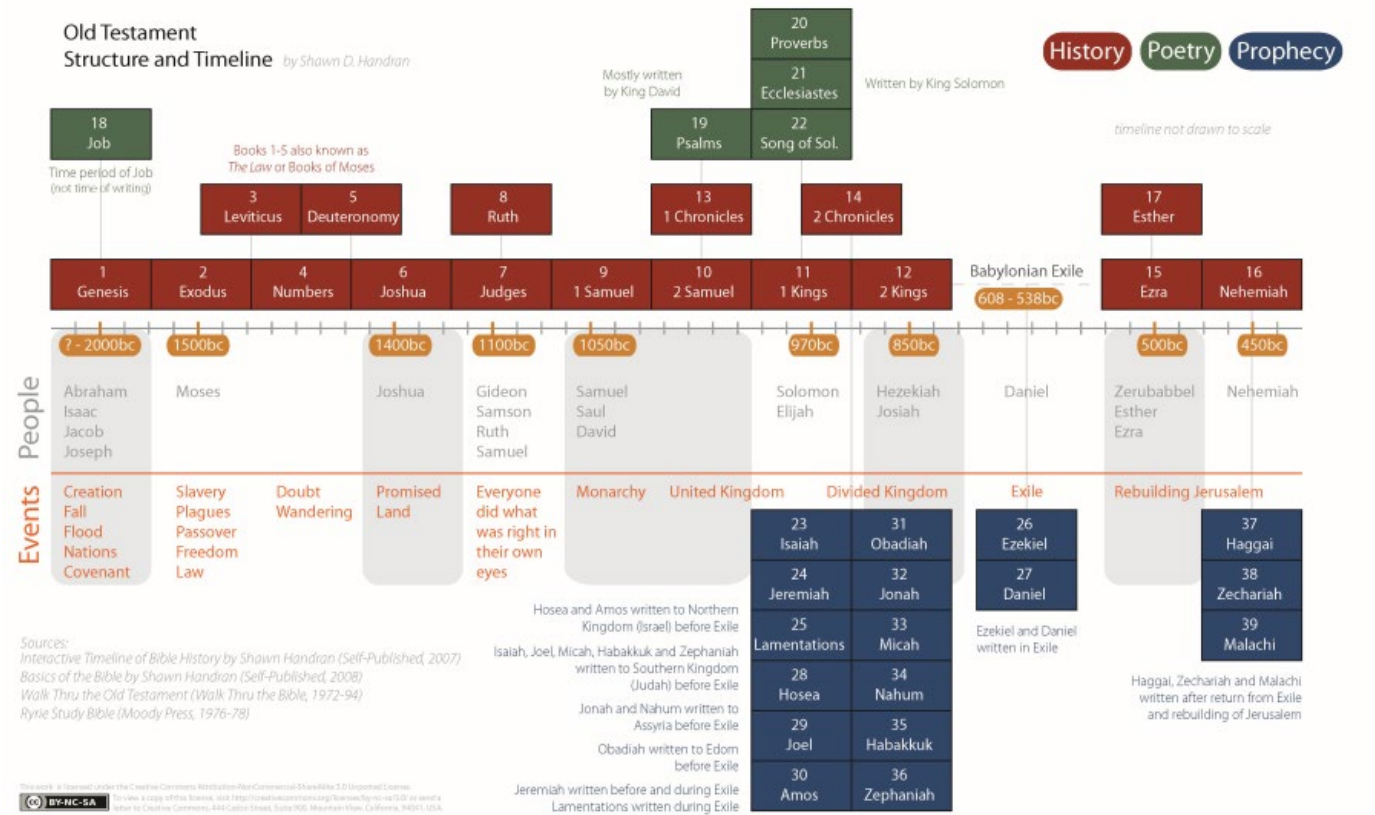
THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

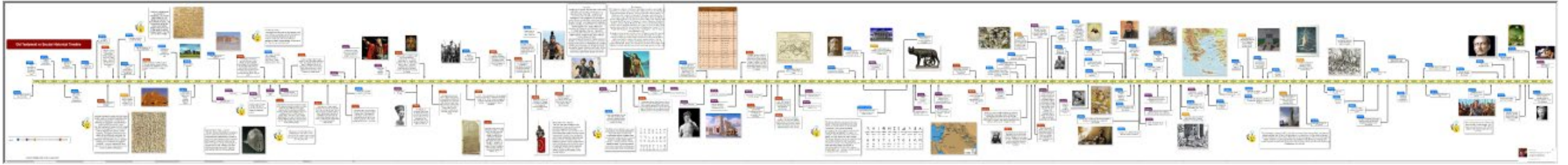
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\* Pentateuch = the first five books of the Old Testament

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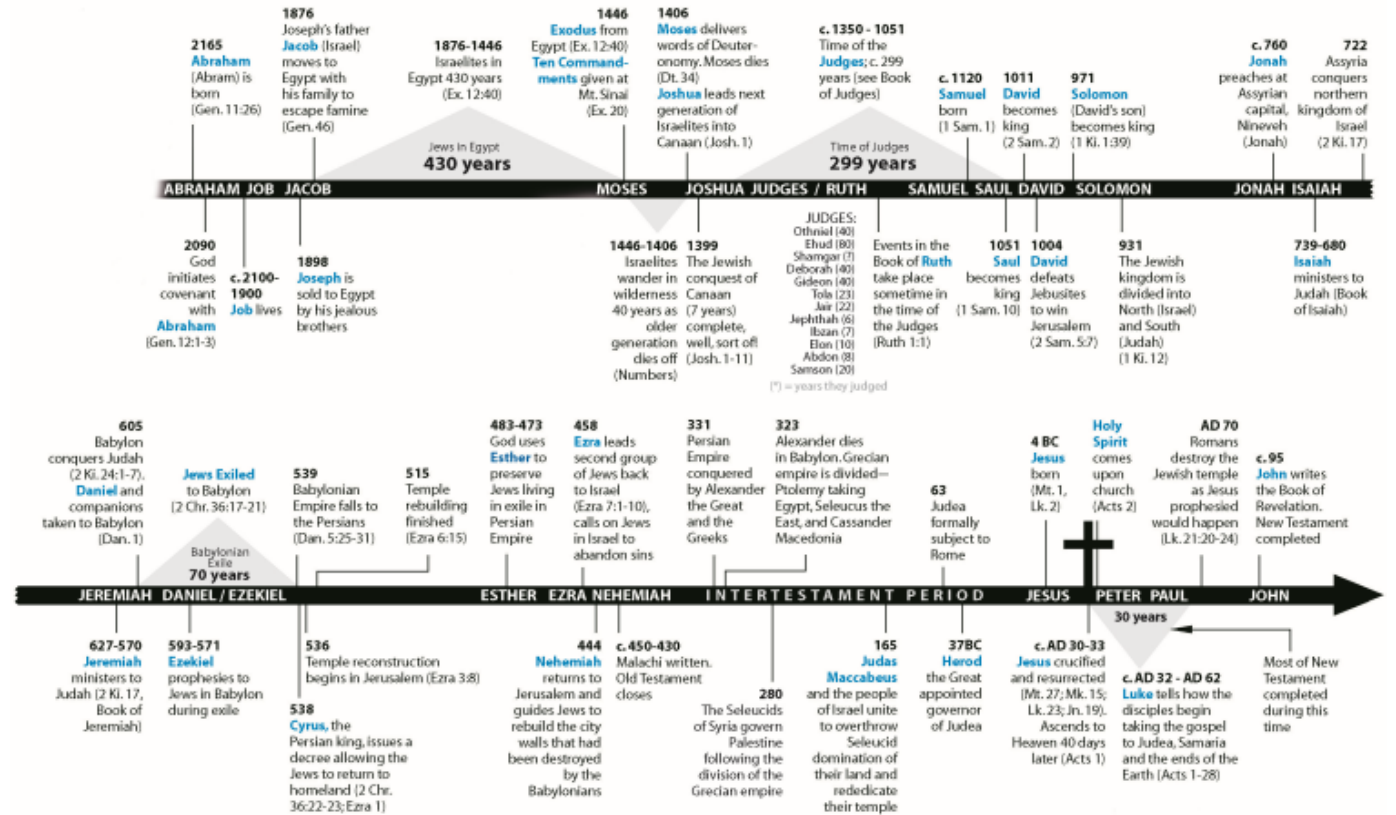




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OT  
Documentary  
Source  
Theory

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**The "E" source:** Here, God's name is "Elohim" until the revelation of God's true name to Moses in the Book of Exodus, after which God's name becomes YHWH in both sources. (Exodus, 1<sup>st</sup> Creation Story  
~ 900 BC)

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**The "J" source:** Here, God's name appears in Hebrew as YHWH, which scholars transliterated in modern times as "Yahweh" (the German spelling uses a "J," pronounced as an English "Y"). Some Bible translations use the term *Jehovah* for this word, but normally it is translated as "The Lord." (Much of Genesis ~ 600 BC)

OT  
Documentary  
Source  
Theory

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**The "P" source:** This is the priestly material. It uses *Elohim* and *El Shaddai* as names of God and demonstrates a special concern for ritual, liturgy, and religious law. (Much of Leviticus and Numbers ~ 500 BC)

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**The "D" source:** The source of the Book of Deuteronomy and parts of the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. It portrays a strong concern for centralized worship in Jerusalem and an absolute opposition to intermarriage with Canaanites or otherwise mixing Israelite culture with Canaanite traditions. (~ 620 BC, King Josiah)

# Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings...

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Generally believed to have been written during the Babylonian captivity in the middle of the sixth century B.C. This history opens with the Hebrews getting a commission from God to leave their Egyptian captivity (which probably resonated with the contemporary readers who had the Babylonian captivity on their minds) and utterly dominate the Holy Land.

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The next section covers the age of the great prophets, who were believed to be in daily contact with God, and who routinely humiliated the Canaanites' deities with feats of strength and miracles.

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Finally, the two books of Kings cover the "Golden Age" of Israel, under the kings Saul, David, and Solomon, centered around the tenth century B.C.

# Isaiah

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Generally agreed to have been written in two or three parts.

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“First Isaiah” texts may have been written close to the time when the man himself really lived, around the eighth century B.C., about the time when the Greeks were first writing down Homer’s stories. These writings run from chapters one to 39, and they’re all doom and judgment for sinful Israel.

## Second Isaiah

- “Second Isaiah” - When Israel actually did fall with the Babylonian conquest and captivity, the works attributed to Isaiah were expanded into what’s now known as chapters 40-55 by the same people who wrote Deuteronomy and the historical texts. This part of the book is about how all evil foreigners will someday be made to pay for what they’ve done to Israel and how Israel will be restored to peace and prosperity. (“voice of one crying in the wilderness...”)

# Third Isaiah

- “Third Isaiah” – Those who support this third division think it was written after the Babylonian captivity ended, because of its praise for King Cyrus of Persia, who let the Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. (Chapters 56-66)

# Jeremiah

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Jeremiah: Jeremiah lived a century or so after Isaiah, immediately before the Babylonian captivity.

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He may have been one of the Deuteronomist writers, or he may have been one of the earliest “J” authors. His own book may have been written by him, or by a man named Baruch ben Neriah, whom he mentions as one of his scribes. Either way, the book of Jeremiah has a very similar style to Kings, and so it’s possible that either Jeremiah or Baruch simply wrote / edited them all.

# Ezekiel

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Ezekiel ben-Buzi was a priest living in Babylon itself during the captivity.

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There's no way he wrote the whole book of Ezekiel himself, given the stylistic differences from one part to the next, but he may have written some. His students/acolytes/junior assistants may have written the rest. These also might have been the writers who survived Ezekiel to draft the P texts after the captivity.

# Job

The book of Job is actually two scripts. In the middle, it's a very ancient epic poem, like the E text, and those two texts may be the oldest writings in the Bible (along with possibly some of the Psalms).

Section one of Job contains a very modern narrative of setup and exposition, probably written around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The happy ending of Job is also very much in this tradition.

Between these two sections, the list of misfortunes that Job endures, and his tumultuous confrontation with God, are written in a style that would have been around eight or nine centuries old when the beginning and ending were written.

# Psalms and Proverbs

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Like Job, Psalms is created from both older and newer sources. For example, some Psalms are written as if there's a reigning king on the throne in Jerusalem, while others directly mention the Babylonian captivity (during which time there was of course no king on the throne of Jerusalem).

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Proverbs was continuously updated until about the mid-second century B.C.

# Ptolemaic Period

The Ptolemaic period began with the Greek conquest of Persia in the late fourth century B.C. Before then, the Jewish people had been doing very well under the Persians, and they were not happy about the Greek takeover.

Their main objection seems to have been cultural: Within a few decades of the conquest, Jewish men were flagrantly adopting Greek culture by dressing in togas and drinking wine in public places.

The writings from this time are of a high technical quality, and tend to be melancholy. Books from this period include Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, Ezra, Nehemiah, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes.

Torah	Date or range of dates most widely held by scholars
<p>Book of Genesis  Book of Exodus  Book of Leviticus  Book of Numbers  Book of Deuteronomy</p>	<p>The majority of modern biblical scholars believe that the <b>Torah</b> – the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – were written during the <b>exilic period</b>.<sup>[20]</sup></p> <p>The five books are drawn from four "sources" (distinct schools of writers rather than individuals): the <b>Priestly</b> source, the <b>Yahwist</b> source, the <b>Deuteronomist</b>, and the <b>non-Priestly</b> source, and the <b>Deuteronomist</b>.<sup>[32]</sup> There is general agreement that the Priestly source is post-exilic.<sup>[32]</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genesis is a post-exilic work combining "Priestly" and "non-Priestly" material.<sup>[33]</sup></li> <li>Exodus is an anthology drawn from nearly all periods of Israel's history.<sup>[34]</sup></li> <li>Leviticus is entirely Priestly and dates from the exilic/post-exilic period.<sup>[35]</sup></li> <li>Numbers is a Priestly redaction (i.e., editing) of a Yahwistic/non-Priestly original.<sup>[36]</sup></li> <li>Deuteronomy, now the last book of the Torah, began as the set of religious laws (these make up the bulk of the book), was extended as the introduction to the Deuteronomistic history, and later still was detached from that history, extended yet again, and edited to fit the Deuteronomistic history.</li> </ul>
Prophets	Date or range of dates most widely held by scholars
<p>Former Prophets:  Book of Joshua  Book of Judges  Books of Samuel  Books of Kings</p>	<p>This group of books, plus Deuteronomy, is called the "Deuteronomistic history" by scholars. The proposal that they made up a unified history, and has been widely accepted. Noth proposed that the entire history was the creation of a single individual working in the exilic period. There has been wide recognition that the history appeared in two "editions", the first in the reign of Judah's King Josiah (late 7th century), the second in the reign of King Josiah's son, King Jehoiachin (late 6th century). Noth's dating was based on the assumption that the history was completed very soon after its last recorded event, the release of King Zedekiah from the Babylonian captivity. However, scholars have termed his reasoning inadequate, and the history may have been further extended in the post-exilic period.<sup>[38]</sup></p>

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for PDF  
document

## Dead Sea Scrolls

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981 different manuscripts –  
discovered in 1946/47 and in 1956 –  
from 11 caves.

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Include the second-oldest known  
surviving manuscripts of works  
included in the Hebrew Bible canon.

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Date from 200 BC – 100 AD.

# Before the Scrolls Were Found

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Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew-language manuscripts of the Bible were Masoretic texts dating to 900 AD.

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The biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls push that date back a full thousand years, to 200 BC.

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The discovery demonstrated the unusual accuracy of transmission over a thousand-year period, rendering it reasonable to believe that current Old Testament texts are reliable copies of the original works.

## For Example

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Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only ***seventeen letters*** in question.

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Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense.

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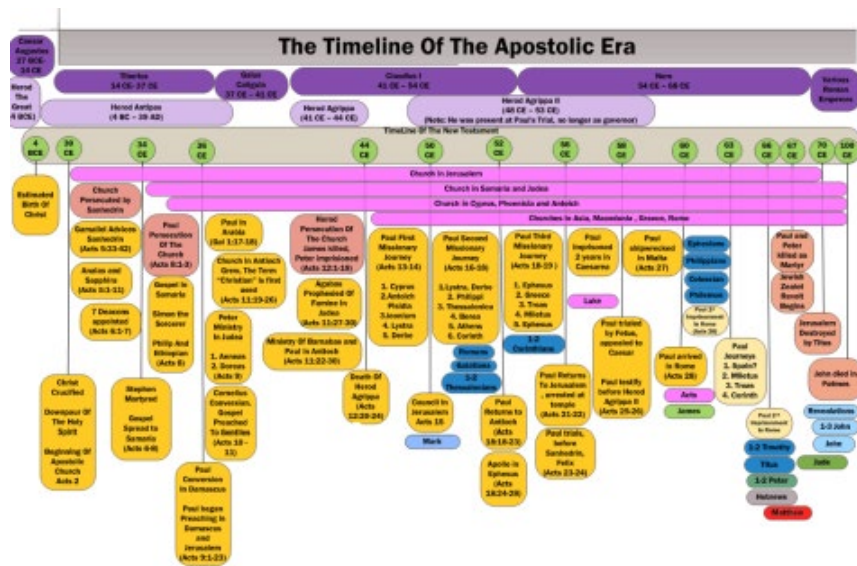
Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions.

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The remaining three letters comprise the word "light," which is added in verse 11, and does not affect the meaning.

# NT Comparison with other ancient texts

Work	Written	Earliest copy	Time lapse	Copies found
<b>Herodotus</b>	488–428 BC	AD 900	1,300 years	8
<b>Thucydides</b>	c. 460–400 BC	c. AD 900	1,300 years	8
<b>Livy's Roman History</b>	59 BC–AD 17	AD 900	900 years	20
<b>Caesar's Gallic War</b>	58–50 BC	AD 900	950 years	9–10
<b>Tacitus</b>	AD 100	AD 100	1,000 years	20
<b>New Testament</b>	AD 40–100	AD 130 - part manuscripts AD 350 - full manuscripts	30–310 years	5,000 + Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 others



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A biblical canon or canon of scripture is a set of texts which a particular religious community regards as authoritative scripture.

The English word "canon" comes from the Greek κανών, meaning "rule" or "measuring stick".

# Biblical Canon

## OT Canon

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There is no scholarly consensus as to when the Hebrew Bible canon was fixed: some scholars argue that it was fixed by the Hasmonean dynasty (140–40 BC), while others argue it was not fixed until the second century AD or even later.

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The Catholic Pontifical Biblical Commission says that "the more restricted Hebrew canon is later than the formation of the New Testament".

## OT Canon

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Some have decided the Jewish canon was determined by a council in Jamnia around 90 AD—but there is no definitive proof of that, and there are documented debates regarding the canon in the 100's AD.

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## NT Canon

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Irenaeus (died c. 202 AD) quotes and cites 21 books that would end up as part of the New Testament, but does not use Philemon, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 3 John and Jude.

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By the early 3rd century Origen of Alexandria may have been using the same 27 books as in the modern New Testament, though there were still disputes over the canonicity of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Revelation.

## NT Canon

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In his Easter letter of 367, Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, gave a list of exactly the same books that would formally become the New Testament canon, and he used the word "canonized." The canon was officially accepted by councils in Carthage in 397 and 419.

Gospel  
Narratives

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Why are there  
both similarities  
and differences in  
the four Gospels?

## “Synoptic” Gospels

The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so similar to each other that, in a sense, they view Jesus "with the same eye" (syn-optic), in contrast to the very different picture of Jesus presented in the Fourth Gospel (John).

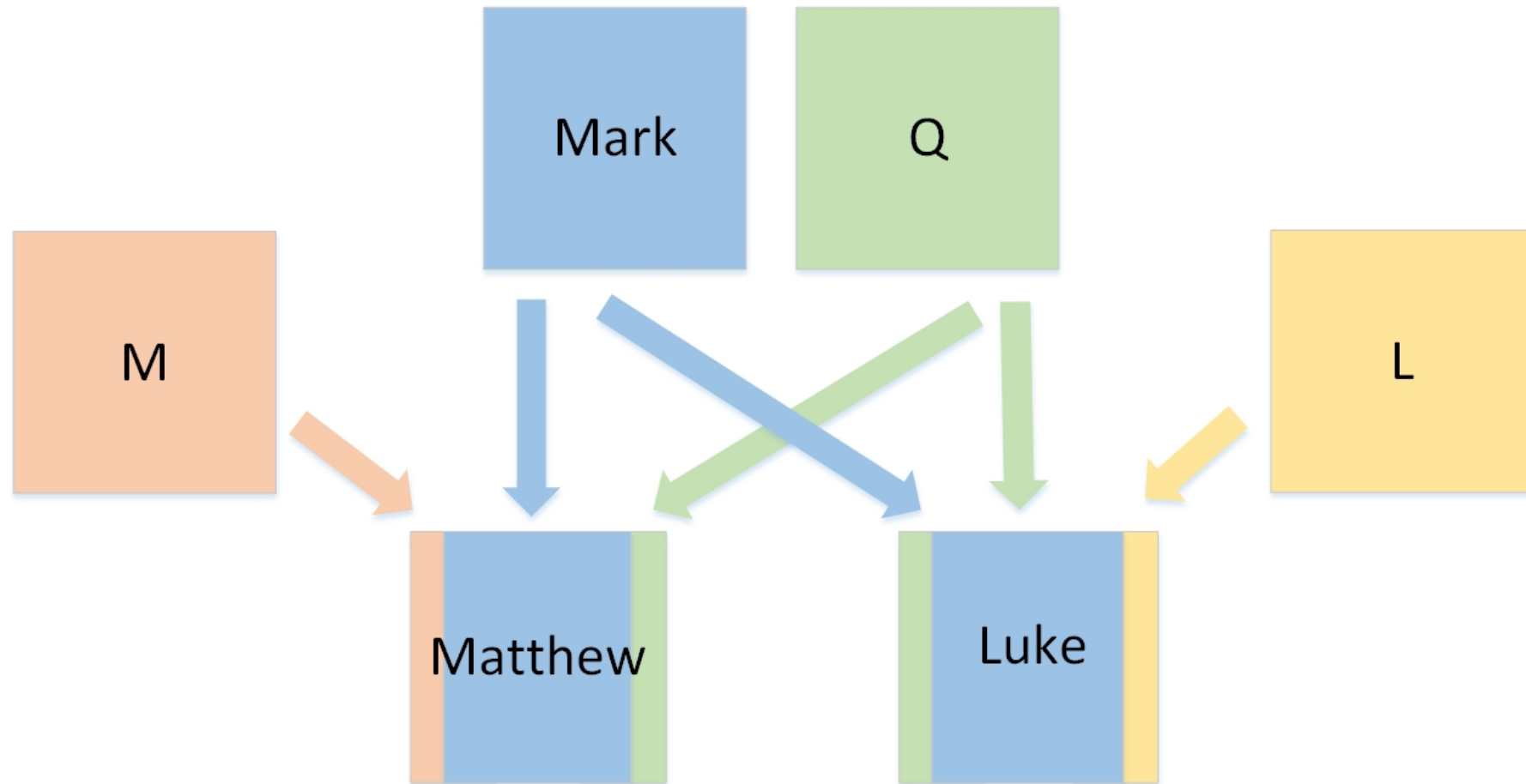
Sometimes  
the match is  
exact

The similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so numerous and so close, not just in the order of the material presented but also in the exact wording of long stretches of text.

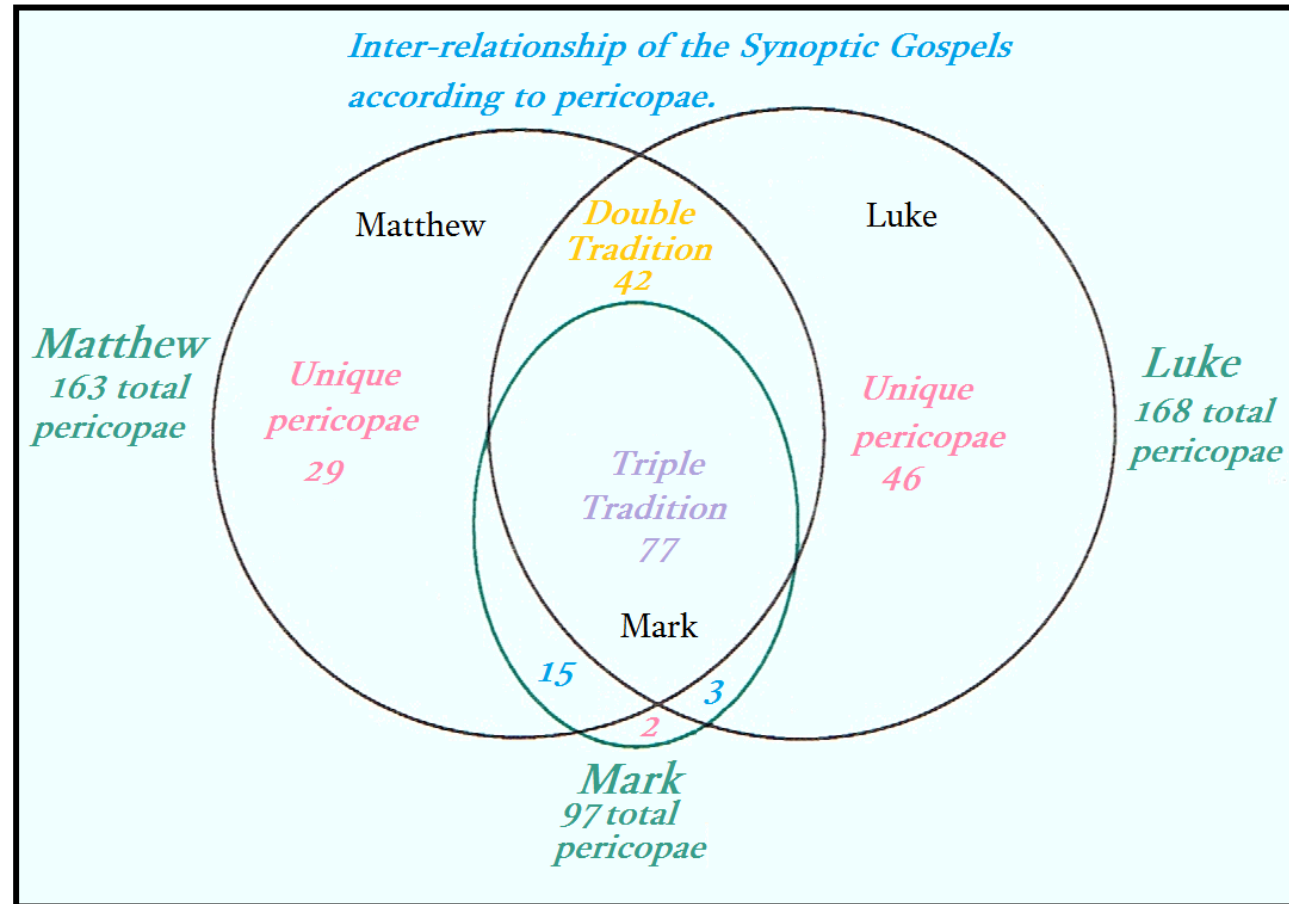
But  
sometimes  
it's not

- The situation is complicated because some of the material is common to all three Synoptics, while other material is found in only two out of these three Gospels.
- Moreover, the common material is not always presented in the same order in the various Gospels.

# Gospel "Four Source" Understanding



# Synoptic Gospels



# Telling the story of Jesus

- Mark writes a fast-paced, condensed account, recording Jesus' miraculous deeds and not recording His long discourses. Mark's favorite word is "immediately."

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- Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience, emphasizes Jesus' fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, proving that He is the long-awaited Messiah. Luke portrays Jesus as the remedy of the (all the) world's ills, emphasizing His perfect humanity and humane concern for the weak, the suffering, and the outcast.

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- John emphasizes Jesus' deity by selecting many conversations and sayings of Jesus on the subject and also including "signs" that prove He is the Son of God. John is a theologian!

# Telling the story of Jesus' Birth

- **Mark:** focused so much on the *urgency and movement* of Jesus' ministry. There is no birth narrative at all—just John the Baptist crying in the wilderness.
- **Matthew:** the *kingship* of Jesus. His genealogy through Abraham and David and Solomon fulfills prophecy. Wise men looking for a new king; Herod's jealousy.
- **Luke:** the *humility/humanity of Jesus and his salvation for all the world*. Elizabeth and Mary, *Magnificat*, Shepherds and flocks
- **John:** the *exaltation and divinity* of Jesus. How Jesus is in charge, driving the all action, completing the will of the Father, and full of glory.

# Telling the story of Jesus' Passion

- **Mark:** the *suffering* of Jesus, how he was tragically rejected, unfairly condemned, viciously beaten, horribly insulted, and cruelly mistreated by multiple groups
- **Matthew:** the *kingship* of Jesus, how the de-facto ruling powers (esp. Pilate & Caiphas) conspired to get rid of someone they saw as a political threat
- **Luke:** the *innocence* of Jesus, how Pilate said he did not deserve death, and others (Herod Antipas, centurion, repentant thief) also recognized his innocence
- **John:** the *exaltation* of Jesus, how he remains in charge, driving the all action, completing the will of the Father, and being glorified as he is lifted up

# Luke vs. the other Synoptics

- Luke is the longest book in the entire New Testament.
- Luke follows the basic outline of Mark: Jesus' preparation for ministry, ministry in Galilee, journey Jerusalem, passion and resurrection—but the journey to Jerusalem, which is one chapter in Mark and two in Matthew, is 10 chapters in Luke.
- Luke includes much new material that is unique.

# Unique to Luke

- Good Samaritan
- Lost coin
- Pharisee and the tax collector
- Prodigal son
- Shrewd manager
- Zacchaeus
- Widow's son raised from the dead
- Words on the cross to forgive his executioners
- Promise to the dying thief

# Luke-Acts really one book

- Overall theme to show how God has acted in history to fulfill God's promises to Israel and to create a world-wide body of believers—the church—drawn from both Jews and Gentiles.
- Luke --> movement *toward* Jerusalem  
Acts --> movement *away from* Jerusalem

# Luke

- Probably Luke, the doctor, Paul's "dear friend" mentioned in Colossians 4:14.
- In Acts, several passages are 1<sup>st</sup> person plural ("we..."), identifying the author as a companion of Paul at these points in his travels.
- So possibly Luke was a Gentile Christian, writing in the mid-60's.

# General Themes of Luke

- First and foremost is the central importance of God's plan. "It is necessary..." provides the overall theme of God's plan....
- God's plan for *the salvation of the world*. Luke uses forms of the verb "to save" more than any other book of the New Testament.

Salvation for  
everyone...  
today

- Luke makes reference to “today” and “now” 25 times!
- Salvation and the coming of the Kingdom are for everyone, and they especially involve role-reversal of earthly status.

Everyone...  
including the  
Gentiles

- At the beginning of Luke, Jesus' genealogy is traced by to Adam (not Abraham, as in Matthew).
- The Gentile centurion is commended for his faith, the Good Samaritan is the hero...all leading up to the full inclusion of Gentiles in Acts.

Everyone...  
including the  
lowly

- In Luke, Jesus is constantly showing concern for the outcasts of society and interacting with women, the poor, and sinners.
- The Beatitudes in Luke include not just the “blessed are the poor” but also “woe to you who are rich”

# Discipleship and money

Several of Luke's additions include a focus on stewardship: parable of the rich fool, the shrewd manager, Lazarus and the rich man, Jesus and Zacchaeus...

# Three hymns at the start of Luke

- *Magnificat*: scattered the proud, brought down the powerful from their thrones, lifted up the lowly, filled the hungry, sent the rich away empty...
- *Benedictus*: God has remembered the covenant with Abraham...to give light to those who sit in darkness...
- *Nunc Dimittis*: a light to enlighten the Gentiles

# Seeing from God's vantage point

- Luke's Gospel is aimed at the world of those who do not belong, be they Jews, Gentiles or whoever.
- From the very first chapter, Luke is out to question our ideas about where the center of things lies, so as to question the way we draw our boundaries.

God is found  
in the  
connections  
we can't make

The person who is 'left over', whose place I cannot guarantee, whose welfare I cannot secure, who does not fit, is the person who reminds me of my own limits; and as I acknowledge the incomplete character of my world of reference and my understanding, I may at least see the seriousness of the question about the fate of those not catered for.

God is found  
in the  
connections  
we won't  
make

All systems, moral and social, begin with the sense that my own understanding of my desires and needs is not the whole story. Yet it seems that all such systems end up by discounting or giving up on certain others.

# Transcendence at the trial

“The whole idea of transcendence is somehow being refashioned as we reflect on Jesus’ trial. For Luke, the transcendent is bound up not just with the lonely witness facing failure but also with the voiceless and powerless of this world.”

# The pain of powerlessness

Another way of putting this is to say that we are in most danger when we deny our own poverty or neediness, and that the presence of the powerless is painful in large part because they reconnect us with that unwelcome need. They do not live in the world we like to think we live in, the world we can organize, so they tell us that our world is smaller than we thought. At its most extreme, this perception can lead to violence : the poor must be eliminated or at the very least pushed right out of sight, because they make us uncomfortable.

# The visibility of powerlessness

For Christians it is therefore extraordinarily important, radically important, to live in a context where we are not protected from the visibility of the powerless.

# Mark's trial

Mark's account of the trial makes us think about the difference of Jesus in terms of God's alienation from almost all our language of meaning, let alone success. In this court, we are being cross-examined on our readiness to reduce God to a provider of meaning and usefulness in the terms with which we are comfortable.

# Matthew's trial

Matthew's trial probes the degree to which our religious fluency blocks out the divine Wisdom, and it begins to ask us what we make of those who are left out or left over by the systems we inhabit.

## Luke's trial

Luke takes us a step further and challenges us not only to stand with those left out and left over, but to find in ourselves the poverty and exclusion we fear and run away from in others - to find in ourselves the tax collector in the Temple, the woman in Simon's house, and both the sons in the parable of the prodigal, with their different kinds of exclusion, guilt or fear.