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## **How to Read and Study the Bible**

### **Lesson Three – Part 1: How We Got the Old Testament**

#### **Lesson Three Topics**

- Reflection Questions
- Key Terms and Definitions
- Introduction to How We Got the Old Testament
  - Canon and Canonization
  - Development of the English Bible
- Ancient Writings
- Checking for Understanding Questions

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#### **Reflection Questions**

A. What professions are governed by a set of authoritative and determinative standards, rules, principles, and criterion on which their practices are judged?

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B. What reasons do many people give for favoring the King James Version of the Bible over other English versions or translations?

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#### **Key Terms**

Apocrypha  
Authoritative  
Authentic  
Canon  
Canonization

Determinative  
English Bible  
Hebrew Bible  
Johannes Guttenberg

Martin Luther  
Translations  
Versions  
William Tyndale

## Lesson Introduction

### **Canon and Canonization**

This lesson is about how the Old Testament came to be in the form that we have it today. This deals with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the canon of the Old Testament and the \_\_\_\_\_ by which the final list of books were determined to be \_\_\_\_\_.

Historically Canon of Scripture is interpreted “measuring rod or rule” from the Greek transliteration kanon. The term used also in a large sense for a list or catalogue. gradually acquired a technical meaning for the Official books containing the rules of the Christian faith. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

Canon is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as 1) a general law, rule, principle, or criterion by which something is judged, and 2) a collection or list of sacred books accepted as \_\_\_\_\_.

William Barclay (a highly regarded 20<sup>th</sup> century New Testament scholar) provides a comprehensive description of the word canon:

The canon of Scripture is that list of books which have been accepted as the Christian Church’s rule of faith; it is the list of the ‘official’ books of the Church; it is the list of books which the church regards as authoritative and determinative for the story of its own history, and for the formation of its life and doctrine.

In this sense the word canon and canonical which already has been employed by Origen came into general use in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Canonization is the process used by the \_\_\_\_\_ and ancient \_\_\_\_\_ to decide which books were authoritative.

There is another set of writings that were not included in the Old or New Testaments called the \_\_\_\_\_. This means “things which ought to be kept \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ away.”

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Some Christians read and study the *Apocrypha* and regard them as \_\_\_\_\_.

In the \_\_\_\_\_ tradition we do not regard the *Apocrypha* as authoritative, nor do the \_\_\_\_\_.

The *Apocryphal* writings are helpful in terms of understanding the events that took place between the Old Testament era and the New Testament era.

People of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ faiths believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

It teaches us how to live a life of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ before Him (**1 Peter 1:16-17**)

### **Checking Your Progress—**

1. What does the word canon mean?

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2. What does the word canonization refer to?

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3. What is the name of another group of ancient writings that were not included in the Old or New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which faith groups do not consider the *Apocrypha* authoritative?

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### **Development of the English Bible – Translations**

“Translation Is nothing more than transferring the message of the one language into another language. Translations are necessary for people who speak a language other than Greek or Hebrew to understand what God is saying through his Word.”  
(Grasping God’s Word, Duvall and Hays)

How did we come to have the English Bible in the form that we have it today? It came to us over a period of several \_\_\_\_\_. Dates that the writings were believed to have been written vary by scholars. [See the chart entitled “**Sections of the Canon – The Holy Scriptures**”]

The early Christian leader Jerome translated the Bible into Latin around AD 400. This was known as the vulgate from a Latin word which means common for a 1000 years churches in British Isles used this Bible.

John Wycliffe is credited with the first translation of the Bible in English. The Wycliffe Bible (New Testament in 1380) This was a word for word translation from Latin to English. John Purvey produced a second that dominated the scene for 200 years until William Tyndale. English New Testament in 1526 based on the Greek Text. (*Grasping God’s Word, Duvall and Hays*)

There are many different translations of the Bible. However, many English-speaking people believe that the King James Version of the Bible is the \_\_\_\_\_ Word of God. They reject more modern versions as perversions of the truth.

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The fact is, that many modern English versions are very helpful in understanding the original Greek and Hebrew texts of the Bible.

The King James Version first appeared in \_\_\_\_\_. It was \_\_\_\_\_ well received. Several years passed before English-speaking Christians finally accepted it as the Scriptures.

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines the term *version* as 1) a particular form of something differing in certain respects from an earlier form or other forms of the same type of thing, i.e., “A revised version of the paper was produced for a later meeting,” or 2) a particular edition or translation of a book or other work, “The English version will be published next year.”

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines the term *translation* as 1) the process of translating [interpreting, converting, explaining] words or text from one language into another, or 2) a written or spoken rendering [interpretation] of the meaning of a word, speech, book, or other text, in another language.

**Note:** The first thing to know about selecting a Bible is that there is a big difference between the Bible *version* or *translation* and the *format* used by publishers to market the Bible.

Duvall, J. Scott; Hays, J. Daniel. *Grasping God's Word, Fourth Edition* (p. 3). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

Later in this introductory study about how to read and study the Bible, we will discuss how to choose a Bible version, translation, and format that best fits your purpose or need.

### Checking Your Progress—

5. Over what period of time did the English Bible come to us?

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6. What do many English-speaking people believe about the King James Version of the Bible?

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7. How was the King James Version initially received by English-speaking people?

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### Ancient Writings

In the ancient world of the Old and New Testaments, preserving something in writing was a tedious and time-consuming process.

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Books were written and copied by hand, and it was not until the invention of the \_\_\_\_\_ around 1455 by Johannes Gutenberg that modern publishing was born. He printed the first Bible in 1455.

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Within a few years of the invention of the printing press, several new \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible were published (Martin Luther – German version, and William Tyndale – English version).

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Making the Bible accessible in \_\_\_\_\_ language form turned out to be a deadly endeavor. William Tyndale was arrested and executed for violating a law that prohibited printing the Bible in this way.

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**Checking Your Progress—**

8. When did the King James Version of the Bible first appear? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who printed the first Bible? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who published the first English Bible translation? \_\_\_\_\_

**Sections of the Canon - The Holy Scriptures**  
**The Hebrew and English Classifications**

<b>HEBREW NAMES FOR THE BOOKS</b>	<b><u>HEBREW</u> ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b><u>ENGLISH</u> ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE DATES CONCERNED</b>
<p style="text-align: center;">In the beginning            These are the names,            And He called In the wilderness            These are the words</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TORAH</b>    Genesis                             Exodus                             Leviticus                             Numbers                             Deuteronomy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Genesis        <b>LAW</b>            Exodus        (Pentateuch)            Leviticus            Numbers            Deuteronomy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Beginning to 1406 B.C.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Joshua            Judges            Ruth            I Samuel            II Samuel            I Kings            II Kings</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FORMER</b>  <b>PROPHETS</b>    Joshua                             Judges                             I Samuel                             II Samuel                             I Kings                             II Kings</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Joshua            Judges            Ruth            I Samuel        <b>HISTORY</b>            II Samuel            I Kings            II Kings            I Chronicles            II Chronicles            Ezra            Nehemiah            Esther</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1406-1380 B.C.            1380-1050 B.C.            1200-1150 B.C.            1100-1010 B.C.            1010-971 B.C.            971-853 B.C.            853-560 B.C.            1010-971 B.C.            971-539 B.C.            539-450 B.C.            445-410 B.C.            483-474 B.C.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Isaiah            Jeremiah            Ezekiel            Hosea            Joel            Amos            Obadiah            Jonah            Micah            Nahum            Habakkuk            Zephaniah</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LATTER</b>  <b>PROPHETS</b>    Isaiah                             Jeremiah                             Ezekiel                             Hosea                             Joel                             Amos                             Obadiah                             Jonah                             Micah                             Nahum                             Habakkuk                             Zephaniah</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Job            Psalms            Proverbs            Ecclesiastes            Song of Solomon</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>POETRY and</b>  <b>WISDOM</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No specific historical period covered.</p>

## Sections of the Canon - The Holy Scriptures The Hebrew and English Classifications

Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Haggai Zechariah Malachi		
Praises Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Songs The Preacher How! Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah I The Words of the Days II The Words of the Days	<b>THE WRITINGS (Hagiographa)</b> Psalms Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Solomon Ecclesiastes Lamentations Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah I Chronicles II Chronicles	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel <b>MAJOR PROPHETS</b>	739-700 B.C. 627-580 B.C. 586 B.C. 593-570 B.C. 605-530 B.C.
		Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	<b>MINOR PROPHETS</b> 760-730 B.C. 500 B.C. 760 B.C. 500 B.C. 770 B.C. 737-690 B.C. 650 B.C. 630 B.C. 627 B.C. 520 B.C. 520-518 B.C. 433 B.C.

**NOTE:** The gray shaded area is associated with the English Bible.

[Source: Walton, John H. 2019. [Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. Accessed through LOGOS Bible Software 4-17-2023]