

The Journey of Our Bible

Why This Matters to Us

Think about the Bible you own. **Why do you believe it's God's Word? What gives it authority in your life?**

Today, we are going to explore how we got that very book in our hands and why the Church has affirmed its authority for centuries.

The foundational belief is that the Bible is divinely inspired, or "God-breathed" (Theopneustos).

This means God is the ultimate author, using human writers as his instruments.

The Four-Step Journey

How did these divinely inspired words become the Bible we read today? It was a four-step journey:

The Event Happens: God acts in history (e.g., Jesus's resurrection).

The Word Is Shared: People tell the story of what happened (oral tradition).

The Word Is Written: A human author, guided by the Holy Spirit, records the event (e.g., Paul's letters).

The Word Is Canonized: The church recognizes and affirms a writing as being divinely inspired.

This isn't a vote; it's a process of recognition.

Foundational Texts and Canons

Masoretic Text: Think of this as the "Official Hebrew Bible." It's the original playbook, meticulously preserved by Jewish scholars. This is the primary source for the Protestant Old Testament. It has 24 books, while our Bibles have 39. It's the same material, just counted differently (e.g., **the 12 Minor Prophets are one book**).

The Apocrypha: A collection of Jewish writings from the centuries between the Old and New Testaments. They are considered Deuterocanonical ("second canon") by Catholics but are not in the Protestant Bible.

The Septuagint: The first translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek for Greek-speaking Jews. It was the Bible for the early Church and included the Apocrypha.

The Vulgate: The first translation of the whole Bible into Latin, created by Jerome in 382 CE. It became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church for over a thousand years.

The Ethiopian Bible: It has the largest canon in Christianity with 81 books and includes unique writings like 1 Enoch and Jubilees, which are examples of Jewish apocalyptic literature.

A Timeline of English Bibles

Here's a look at the major English translations and why they were created:

Date	Translator	Source	Significance & Discussion Point
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1382	John Wycliffe	Latin Vulgate	The first handwritten English Bible. Why was this so controversial at the time?
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1530s William Tyndale Greek & Hebrew The first to translate from the original languages. He used Erasmus's printed Greek New Testament. Why was this a game-changer?

1560 Geneva Bible Greek & Hebrew The first "study Bible" with numbered verses and extensive notes. Why would study notes be seen as a threat by a king?

1606-1610 Douay-Rheims Latin Vulgate The official Catholic English Bible, created to counter the Protestant versions. Why was it important for Catholics to translate from the Latin?

1611 King James Version Greek & Hebrew Commissioned by King James I to create a unified Bible. It's famous for its majestic language, which greatly influenced the English language.

The Book of Enoch: A Case Study

Why do you think a book like Enoch was ultimately rejected by most canons, even though it was widely read and even quoted in the New Testament? We'll discuss three main reasons:

Authorship was in question: It's considered pseudepigrapha ("false writings").

Content was speculative: It was seen as fantastical and not in harmony with other Scripture.

Lacked universal recognition: It was not part of the Jewish canon (the Tanakh).