

DO THE MOST ACCURATE BIBLE VERSIONS ALL MISS THE INSPIRED ORDER OF THE BOOKS???

By David Lee Burris

THE ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT														
HEBREW TANAKH / MT		GREEK SEPTUAGINT		LATIN VULGATE		WORLDWIDE CATHOLIC BIBLES		GERMAN LUTHER 1534		ENGLISH KJV 1611		WORLDWIDE MOST BIBLES		
LAW	1	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	
	PROPHETS	2	Joshua + Judges 1-2 Sam + 1-2 Kings	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth	Joshua Judges Ruth
		3	Isaiah	1-2 Sam+1-2 Kings (= 1-4 Kings)	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings
		4	Jeremiah Ezekiel											
5	12 Minor Prophets	Esdras 3 Ezra + Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	Esdras 3-4 Ezra Nehemiah	
WRITINGS	6	Psalms (5) Proverbs Job	Psalm 151 Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Job	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	
	7	Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther	Psalm 151 Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Job Wisdom Jesus Sirach Psalms of Solomon	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	Job Psalms (5) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom Jesus Sirach	
	8	Daniel Ezra + Nehemiah 1-2 Chronicles	12 Minor Prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Baruch Lamentations Epistle of Jeremy Ezekiel Susanna Daniel Additions to Daniel	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel Additions to Daniel 12 Minor Prophets
	9	= 22 Scrolls 39 / 43 Books												

Blue: The correct order of the books of the OT in TANAKH and MT (Masoretic Text, eg Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia). Examples in Spanish, English, German translations: Alba Bible 1430, JSLT 1876 (Julia Smith Literal Translation), Kautzsch 1894 (Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments), Bernfeld 1909 (Die Heilige Schrift: nach dem masoretischen Text neu übersetzt), JPS 1917 (Hebrew Bible in English). Black: Canonical writings in Christianity. Examples of Catholic Bibles: Vulgate 384, Wycliffe Bible 1382-1395, Gutenberg-Bible 1452-1455, Mentelin-Bible 1466 (German), Douay-Rheims Bible 1582 (DRB), NJB 1985 (New Jerusalem Bible), EÜ 1980 (Einheitsübersetzung, German). The position of the Apocrypha varies in Bibles. The Septuagint knew 4 books of kings (= Sam + kings). Ezra=Esdras. The "12 Minor Prophets" of the Old Testament (OT) are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. - Red: Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING:

Chronological order of books of the Bible According to the estimated date of the events that they describe

Old Testament Book	Author	Estimated date (round figures)
Genesis	Moses compiled	~4000 - 1800
Job	Unknown	About 2100
Exodus	Moses	1800-1445
Leviticus	Moses	1445
Numbers	Moses	1445-1407
Deuteronomy	Moses	1407-1406
Psalms	Various	1410-520 (most 1000-700)
Joshua	Unknown, possibly Joshua	1406-1375
Judges	Unknown, possibly Samuel	1375-1075
Ruth	Unknown, possibly Samuel	1140
1 Samuel	Unknown, possibly Samuel	1100-1010
2 Samuel	Unknown, possibly Samuel	1010-970
1 Kings	Unknown	970-853
2 Kings	Unknown	852-586
1 Chronicles	Unknown, possibly Ezra	1003-970
2 Chronicles	Unknown, possibly Ezra	970-609
Song of Songs	King Solomon	950
Proverbs	King Solomon	950-700
Ecclesiastes	King Solomon	937
Obadiah	Obadiah	840
Joel	Joel	835
Amos	Amos	766
Jonah	Unknown, possibly Jonah	760
Hosea	Hosea	753
Isaiah	Isaiah	739-701
Micah	Micah	735
Nahum	Nahum	650
Zephaniah	Zephaniah	638
Jeremiah	Jeremiah	627-586
Habakkuk	Habakkuk	625
Lamentations	Jeremiah	586
Ezekiel	Ezekiel	593-573
Daniel	Daniel	605-536
Haggai	Haggai	520
Zechariah	Zechariah	520
Esther	Unknown	483-472
Ezra	Unknown, possibly Ezra	537-456
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	445-432
Malachi	Malachi	430

The period of the Jewish exile in Babylon is shaded red.

New Testament Book	Author	Estimated date (round figures)
Matthew	Matthew	5 BC – AD 30
Mark	John Mark	5 BC – AD 30
Luke	Luke	6 BC – AD 30
John	John	6 BC – AD 30
Acts	Luke	30-62
James	James	45
1 Thessalonians	Paul	51
2 Thessalonians	Paul	52
Galatians	Paul	54
1 Corinthians	Paul	54
2 Corinthians	Paul	57
Romans	Paul	57
Ephesians	Paul	62
Colossians	Paul	62
Philemon	Paul	62
Philippians	Paul	62
1 Timothy	Paul	63
1 Peter	Peter	64
Titus	Paul	66
2 Timothy	Paul	67
2 Peter	Peter	67
Jude	Jude	68
Hebrews	Unknown	68
1 John	John	90
2 John	John	92
3 John	John	94
Revelation	John	95

Reference:

Rich Valkanet (2010) "Bible Timeline", Discovery Bible and Biblos.com

All Dates are approximate. They are based on traditionally accepted timeframes and general consensus of a variety of sources, including 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 Encyclopedia, and Easton's Bible Dictionary.

<https://biblehub.com/timeline/>

Chronological order of the books of the Bible.

Here is a listing of the books of the Bible in the order in which they were *written*...

1440 - 1400 B.C.

Genesis #1
Exodus #2
Leviticus #3
Numbers #4
Deuteronomy #5

1400 - 1000

Joshua #6
Judges #7

1000 - 586 B.C. (pre-exile - mid-exile)

Period of David and Solomon (ca. 1000 - 931):

Psalms #19
Ruth #8
1st Samuel #9
2nd Samuel #10
Job #18
Proverbs #20
Ecclesiastes #21
Song of Solomon #22

Period of Rehoboam to Hezekiah (931 - 686):

Isaiah #23
Hosea #28
Joel #29

Amos #30
Obadiah #31
Jonah #32
Micah #33

Period of Hezekiah to the exile (686 - 586):

Nahum #34
Habakkuk #35
Zephaniah #36

1st Kings #11
2nd Kings #12
1st Chronicles #13
2nd Chronicles #14

Jeremiah #24
Lamentations #25
Ezekiel #26
Daniel #27

516 - 400 B.C. (post-exilic)

Ezra #15
Nehemiah #16
Esther #17

Haggai #37
Zechariah #38
Malachi #39

40 - 45. A.D.

Matthew: #1 (#40)

45 - 50 A.D.

1st Thessalonians #13 (#52)
2nd Thessalonians #14 (#53)
1 Corinthians #7 (#46)
2 Corinthians #8 (#47)
Romans #6 (#45)
Luke #3 (#42)

50 - 55 A.D.

Galatians #9 (#48)
Ephesians #10 (#49)
Philippians #11 (#50)
Colossians #12 (#51)
Philemon #18 (#57)
Acts #5 (#44)

1st Timothy #15 (#54)
2nd Timothy #16 (#55)
Titus #17 (#56)
Hebrews #19 (#58)

55 - 60 A.D.

James #20 (#59)
Jude #26 (#65)

60 - 68 A.D.

1st Peter #21 (#60)
2nd Peter #22 (#61)
Mark #2 (#41)

John #4 (#43)
1st John #23 (#62)
2nd John #24 (#63)
3rd John #25 (#64)
Revelation #27 (#66)

ONLY OUT-OF-ORDER IN TIME SEQUENCE?

The Transmission of the Bible

The Completeness of the Bible

"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."

[Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV](#)

"Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

[Deuteronomy 12:32 NKJV](#)

Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

[Proverbs 30:6 NKJV](#)

Until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or one serif will pass away from the Law – until everything has come to pass (fulfilled on the cross).

[Matthew 5:18](#)

(18) I bear solemn witness to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, [that] if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues written in this book. (19) And [that] if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and of the holy city which have been written [about] in this book."

[Revelation 22:18-19](#)

These scriptures are sufficient to demonstrate that the Bible has a complete form which may not be altered in any way, either by addition or subtraction. In its unaltered form, the Bible is flawless ([Prov.30:5 NIV](#)); it is the complete Word of God, and we are to live by "every word" of it. ([Deut.8:3](#); [Matt.4:4](#); [Lk.4:4](#)).

So is the Word which goes forth from my mouth. It will not return to Me in vain without accomplishing what I please, and it will be successful in whatever [purpose] I have sent it forth.

[Isaiah 55:11](#)

As shown by this verse, the import of the completeness of the Bible as seen from the divine viewpoint has to do with God's opinion of its completeness and what that means. That is to say, the Bible is absolutely complete as God would have it to be in order to fulfill the purpose for which **He** has ordained it. It does not have to conform to human expectations of what it "ought to be" in man's eyes. The Bible is everything it was always meant to be in God's eyes, and blessedly so. Just because some critical work or school of philosophy or scientific endeavor finds fault with scripture does not in any way mean that scripture is faulty. Scripture is perfectly complete, a work of absolute integrity, lacking nothing in terms of accomplishing what God has been pleased to accomplish with it, perfectly fulfilling the purpose for which He has sent it forth.

We can demonstrate the Bible's completeness in contradistinction to secular criticisms of it by explaining what it is not.

(1) The Bible is not a Textbook:

In terms of its form, the Bible is a collection of individual books written by different men at different times in different languages and in different literary forms for different specific contemporary purposes – and yet its power and presentation of the truth is seamlessly perfect throughout its whole, and its message necessary and powerful throughout for God's people at all times.

These differences in composition do mean that the Bible does not present material in the same way that, say, a junior high school social studies text would. Each book of the Bible has to be considered individually as well as being seen for what it also is, namely, an integral part of a perfect whole. So, to expect the Bible to directly and in one place "tell us all we want to know about the subject of sin", for example, is to misunderstand its composition and also to some degree its purpose. The Bible does indeed have much to say about sin of course (and all other topics about which God wants His children to be informed), but it does not present the material in the same way a pedagogical text would do. Part of that has to do with the way in which the Bible was written at different times and places with different immediate objectives, but it is also true that the Bible's distinctive manner of presenting the truth is absolutely deliberate on God's part: those who really want the truth have to demonstrate some level of commitment in order to receive it.

(10) And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" (11) He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. (12) For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. (13) I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (14) And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;

(15) For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.' "

[Matthew 13:10-15 NKJV](#)

This issue of the truth being veiled in scripture is both a synchronic and a diachronic one. Not only is understanding of the truth which the Bible contains available only to believers **today** (synchronicity) as we progressively advance in spiritual maturity, adding "precept upon precept" by growing in that truth ([Is.28:10](#)), but, as Peter tells us, even writers of scripture of the past were desirous of knowing the mysteries relating to Christ about which they were given to write but which at the time of writing were not fully perceptible (until Christ came in the flesh: [1st Peter 1:10-12](#)).

(2) The Bible is not a History Book:

Similarly, many have found supposed errors in the Bible's presentation of history; but, analogous to the above, that is an incorrect and superficial assessment in every single case where such claims are made. God is not required to present things in His book according to modern sensibilities or according to modern historical paradigms or according to contemporary appraisals of what happened in the ancient past. He is not required to include everything secular history thinks should have been included. Indeed, the Bible only ever treats historical matters where they intersect directly with the **true** history it is presenting, the history of the salvation of the human race (for those willing to be saved); that is to say, history from God's point of view, wherein one Joseph is more important than all the Pharaohs of Egypt – and the entire secular history of Egypt – from beginning to end.

This difference of essential viewpoint accounts for most alleged "errors". The fact that the Bible contains details and information not to be found in secular ancient history does not make them untrue. They are true. The fact that the Bible does not mention historical events or personages deemed to be crucially important by secular ancient history does not render biblical accounts which take place simultaneously or in the same geographic area untrue. They are true. The Bible's essential purpose is different; it includes what the Spirit found important and not things which the Spirit found unimportant – despite what human historians think. The fact is that everything the Bible says is true, and if instead of assuming deficiencies in scripture secular ancient history began with that premise, it would be much closer to the mark in its efforts to uncover the past – for it would then have in its possession the only source from antiquity which is minus any error, one which sheds so much light on what **really** happened in the past.

History in general and ancient history in particular is an interpretation of events seen through a human-viewpoint lens and necessarily slanted towards the biases of the particular historian doing the writing. Ancient history should especially be subject to exceptional skepticism wherever it diverges from the biblical record: the data available from the ancient world is infinitesimally minute compared to the vastness of the epochs it covers. Taking ancient Egypt as an example, regardless of his or her claim to credentials, no Christian should accept the dogmatism of any Egyptologist who proclaims that certain things the Bible says are "untrue" based upon his/her ever fluctuating (as new "facts" are unearthed) and necessarily massively incomplete understanding of the past.

Scripture is not history, but every historical detail it records is correct. Scripture does not approach the past as a history book would do, because the Bible is concerned with spiritual and not with secular events; and when it does treat secular events, it always does so from that spiritual perspective.

(3) The Bible is not an Archaeology Report:

Archaeology in particular is fond of finding fault with biblical accounts. In part that has to do with the sensationalist nature of that quasi-science: self-promotion is essential because digs and expeditions are very expensive. Patrons current & potential have to be kept interested and impressed respectively, and there is no better way to do so, it seems, than by disproving conventional wisdom through validating some famous ancient source, or by "proving" some other ancient source "wrong" (the Bible being the favorite target here).

Archaeology is given to making the most extravagant claims based upon the flimsiest of evidence. If a literary text makes a particular claim, e.g., stating that so-and-so was king when such-and-such an event took place, it may be possible to cross-check that claim based upon other historical accounts or epigraphical evidence. But for the most part, archaeology finds objects, and what any specific object may "mean" is generally open to a wide range of possible interpretations.

That is to say, finding a pot of a particular type and style (whose dating has been more or less established) at a particular excavation layer in a particular dig whose discovery at that layer is "inconsistent" with what the Bible is thought to say about events that took place in this locale at that time and place doesn't automatically make the Bible "wrong" – although such is often more than implied in the headline of the press release heralding the discovery:

1) The dating might be incorrect (especially if "scientific" dating methods are used to establish it [see previous footnote reference]); 2) The correlation between the dig & the biblical place might be incorrect (geographic locales taken for granted as being the town of "____" mentioned in the Bible are notoriously unreliable); 3) The pot might actually not belong to the layer where it was found (intrusions are common because people of all times have a tendency to dig – foundations, cellars, treasure troves, and just plain holes); 4) The pot could be a forgery.

5) The archaeologist's understanding of the Bible may be faulty (not surprisingly also far from rare). Any one of the numerous and often unstated assumptions made by the archaeologists in question and upon which the claim is predicated might be flawed. Generally speaking, when archaeologists discover a pot, they have found a pot. Claiming that said pot overturns previous historical assumptions should always be met skeptically with a grain of salt; claiming that it overturns the **Biblical** record should be met with a cellar of it.

(4) The Bible is not a Scientific Journal:

The Bible is a spiritual book. Modern science, however, is fundamentally materialistic, denying as an "article of faith" (as ironic as that obviously is) any trace of the spiritual in the material universe it studies. That is to say, science today is not "two-tracked" (as Newton who could effectively study the world as God created it without doubting that God created it), nor is it "compartmentalized" (so as to allow faith and empirical research to coexist). Science today is anti-spiritual as a dogmatic belief (more irony).

Much of this has to do with the rise of evolutionary and predictive science. For while discoveries in traditional physics, e.g., can be tested empirically, evolutionary and predictive sciences must be taken completely on faith that their mathematical models/theories based upon probability are reasonably grounded – and that what is true of the physical universe today was always true and always will be (and that double fallacy is a fundamental, fatal flaw in all such models). It is possible to examine the creation today as it is, to measure, to probe and to test theories about how it has been given to operate where results can be reproduced by others. But it is most definitely **not** possible to look deep into the past or far into the future and do the same. One can theorize, one can model, but one **cannot** "prove" – either that what now exists happened "because of ABC" or that because of what now exists "XYZ will happen".

This is the fundamental and, one would think, obvious flaw in theories of evolution and climatic change, namely, no researcher can travel back or forward in time so as to test the model or the theory. Such models and theories are based on assuming that what we see now has always been more or less the same (so as to validate evolution) and always will be (so as to validate climate science). In other words, evolution in particular assumes no God, no divine creation of the universe, no Genesis gap judgment, no great flood – and no anything else of a spiritual nature has ever occurred. Climate science similarly projects a narrow range of present data forward in time – as if God has nothing to say in the matter.

For those who have dedicated much time and effort to critiquing these two areas of "scientific" inquiry, it will be obvious that these are not the only problems with the methods they employ. For one thing, in both areas, as new "facts" are uncovered, new theories developed, and new models constructed, "what is true" today is likely to be radically different from "what is true" tomorrow – if the past is any sort of prologue. For another, the fact that both areas have become highly political in terms of what may be said and also in terms of how funding for such research is approved, likewise vitiates claims that such "science" is in any way objective.

The main point to remember here, however, is that God is in no need to explain things to His people in terms that the modern scientific community would accept – especially as they would never accept the Bible no matter how it explained things inasmuch as they deny all things spiritual as a tenet of faith. What the Bible says about *ex nihilo* original creation of the universe is absolutely true – even if modern science prefers its own ever-changing "scriptures". What the Bible says about the creation of Adam and Eve is true – even if modern science scoffs (and continually presents new theories about "the origin of mankind"). What the Bible says about the great flood is true – even if modern science pronounces it impossible.

(5) The Bible is not a 'Church' Document:

Only the Bible is the Word of God. God has provided it to His people as our only **direct** link to the truth during our short sojourning here in this world. Believers who want to grow spiritually do need good teachers. But all believers have the right – and the responsibility – to read the Bible for themselves. Since it is God's gift to us all – explaining and proclaiming and illuminating **the** Gift, Jesus Christ – it cannot be superseded or out-ranked or replaced by any other writings whatsoever. No denomination's creed is superior to scripture. No ancient writing of church fathers or church historians or church officials carries any weight when placed in the scales with the Bible – not in God's eyes (and His is the only opinion which counts). God designed the Bible the way He designed it to be the perfect gift to all believers at all times. The Bible **is** the truth. Therefore, to give preference to any extra-biblical writing based on any sort of church authority however illustrious (in the eyes of the one giving said preference) – on the grounds that said authority has "a better understanding" – is always a tremendous mistake.

Regardless of all quibbles from all sources, the Bible is in fact complete. It is God's complete message for us who have believed in Jesus Christ. Casting doubt on that completeness necessarily undermines its authority (in the eyes of the one doubting though not in truth).

Without the Bible, we would know nothing about Jesus Christ. Doubting its integrity, its completeness, in any part casts doubt upon the whole. The world proclaims **all** of the miraculous events described by the Bible – from the creation of the universe to the creation of mankind, from the miracles of our Lord to the second advent and beyond into eternity, from judgment after death to resurrection for the righteous – as nothing but myths. For believers to be "fighting it out" with unbelievers over any such points in any of the categories above is, except for those gifted in apologetics, counter-productive, not helpful for one's own faith, and not likely to change the minds or hearts of naysayers.

The Present Form of the Bible

Accepting that the Bible is the perfectly complete message God has provided for His people to guide them in all faith and practice, produced in just the way He intended ***in its original form***, can we be sure that the book we hold in our hands is the exact book written for us by those inspired by the Holy Spirit to do so? We can indeed!

Universal Oral Tradition in Ancient Times:

In the ancient world, unlike today, silent reading was virtually unheard of. Everyone read aloud. While the modern world is visually centered, the ancient world was an oral-focused time. One result of this difference is that people's memories were better at retaining texts word-for-word. This is loosely analogous to the phenomenon of people today who have a hard time memorizing printed text by rote, but being able to recall verses from favorite songs without any trouble. Greek in particular was very musical (in fact it was originally tonal). In ancient Greece, there was an entire professional track of individuals, rhapsodes, who made their living by reciting from memory Homer and other favorite poems and literary works. In our visual world, the idea of memorizing the entire *Iliad* word-for-word seems impossible, but it was not uncommon in antiquity. Simply put, at that time people were used to receiving and retaining most of their information by hearing it and remembering it. In terms of the Bible, since books (papyrus rolls) were expensive, both because the material (papyrus) was costly and because copying was a painstaking and time-consuming occupation, most early Christians did not have their own copy of the scriptures; they went to church to hear them read (especially after the cessation of the "sign gifts": [1Cor.14:26](#)), and they no doubt took pains to remember what they heard because that was the only way to have a "copy" – implanted in their memory (whereas today we may not pay such particular attention because we have our own Bible at home).

Now when this epistle is **read** [aloud] among you, see that it is **read** [aloud] also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise **read** [aloud] the epistle from Laodicea.

[Colossians 4:16 NKJV](#)

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle to be **read** [aloud] to all the holy brethren.

[1st Thessalonians 5:27 NKJV](#)

Until I come, devote yourself to [public] **reading** [of the scriptures aloud], to encouragement, to teaching [the Word].

[1st Timothy 4:13](#)

Reading of the scriptures aloud – great portions of them – and teaching and explaining these same scriptures constituted the major activity in the early church gatherings. Thus, the members of the early church generally had a much better "mental Bible" in their heads and hearts than is the case for most of us today – and in the original Greek at that – with the result that errors would be caught much more easily (and corrected) than we might imagine. In this, the early churches followed the practice which had been the case in Jewish synagogues ([Lk.4:16-21](#);

cf. [Ex.24:7](#); [Deut.31:11](#); [Josh.8:34-35](#); [2Ki.23:2](#); [Neh.8:3](#); [8:8](#); [8:18](#); [9:3](#); [13:1](#); [Jer.36:6](#)):

(15) And after the **reading** of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, **say on.**"

[Acts 13:14-15 NKJV](#)

It was standard practice in the ancient world to copy letters and books (scrolls) that were important to you whenever you had the chance (cf. [2Tim.4:13](#)). As there is nothing more important than the Word, we can be sure that the early congregations all did so with all the New Testament books at every given opportunity, sharing no doubt with neighboring congregations until each had at least one complete copy—which is really the only way to explain the vast amount of evidence for scripture surviving from antiquity as compared to Classical works.

I **wrote** to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have preeminence among them, does not receive us. [3rd John 1:9 NKJV](#)

In this situation the man who has usurped John's apostolic authority prevents standard practice, namely, reading aloud a letter written to the whole church which, if it were inspired, would have been copied and distributed thereafter (as was the case with this epistle quoted). The fact that this person prevents standard practice shows what standard practice was. This universal reading and re-reading aloud of the scriptures lovingly copied and preserved, in a time when people were attuned to remembering the spoken word, served not only to widely distribute the New Testament and the knowledge of it, but also to ensure the accuracy of early copies of the original text.

Commentary: While the canon of scripture is indeed inspired, the placement of the books is not. The [chronological] order of the Hebrew Bible, for example, is somewhat different from the order you are no doubt familiar with (e.g., 1&2 Chronicles are the very last books, with Daniel placed along with Ezra and Nehemiah just before them). The earliest and best semi-complete manuscript of the New Testament, codex Sinaiticus, places Hebrews before Paul's pastoral epistles, and Acts comes before James. This is certainly understandable inasmuch as the chronology of the life and ministry of the apostle Paul is very problematic, especially in regard to the dates of his epistles. Still, the first five books ("of Moses") are universally first in the OT just like the gospels are in the NT, with the book of Revelation universally last. There is also the question, when you say chronological order, of whether the date of the events described or the date of writing is meant - and there can be a wide divergence (as with Moses relating of the earliest events of mankind in Genesis). The book of Ruth, for example, is placed in our English Bible in its rough order of chronological events, but was possibly written during Solomon's time.

No generally accepted chronology exists with any great specificity for most of the books of the Bible because the internal indications of dating are not sufficient to give us a precise fix in most cases, and so even those scholars with high view of inspiration tend to be divided over the exact dates of many of the individual books of the Bible, let alone the *floruit* of their divinely inspired human authors. – *Internet*



Jerome and the Latin Vulgate

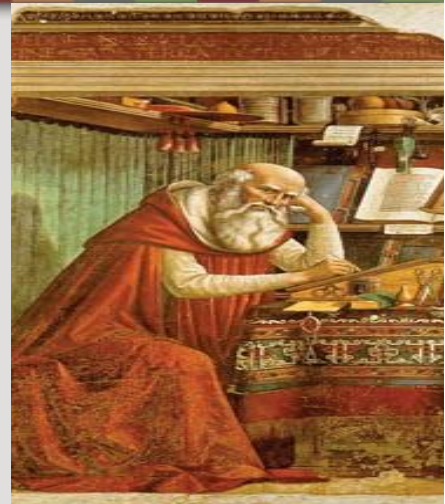
Chapter 3

AD 247 - AD 420

ROSE

- Jerome lived in the desert for two years before he realized he was not called to live alone.
- When he returned to Rome, the bishop asked him to create a reliable Latin Bible.

Jerome



Jerome and the Latin Vulgate

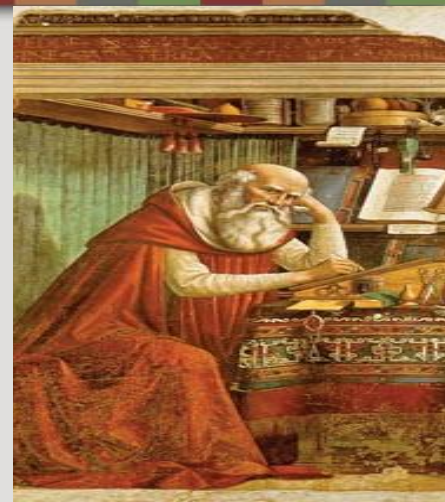
Chapter 3

AD 247 - AD 420

ROSE

- A wealthy widow named Marcella financed Jerome's translation.
- Jerome, Marcella, and a friend named Paula embraced extreme self-denial—even to the point of refusing ever to bathe.

Jerome



Jerome and the Latin Vulgate

Chapter 3

AD 247 - AD 420

ROSE

- The Latin text that Jerome finished in AD 405 became known as the "Vulgate" (or "Common") Bible.
- For nearly 1,500 years, the Vulgate was the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Latin Vulgate: The Need for New Translations

Matthew 4:17 and Penance

do penance (outward practice)
repent (inward psychological state)

Luke 1:28 and Mary

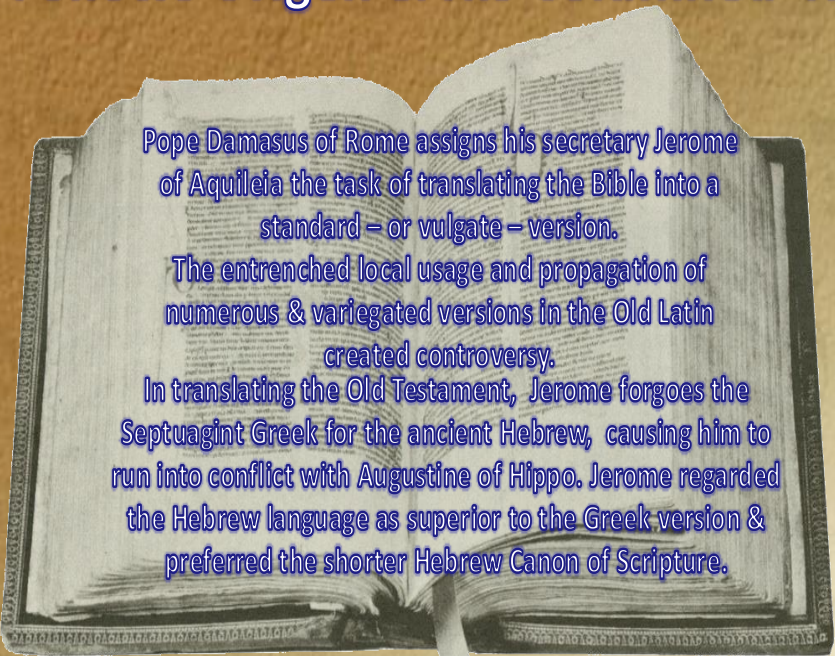
grata plena (full of grace, or favored one)

Ephesians 5:31–32 and Marriage

sacramentum (sacrament)
mysterion (mystery)

Chart 150

Jerome Follows Origen & His Columned Hexapla.



Pope Damasus of Rome assigns his secretary Jerome of Aquileia the task of translating the Bible into a standard – or vulgate – version.

The entrenched local usage and propagation of numerous & variegated versions in the Old Latin created controversy.

In translating the Old Testament, Jerome forgoes the Septuagint Greek for the ancient Hebrew, causing him to run into conflict with Augustine of Hippo. Jerome regarded the Hebrew language as superior to the Greek version & preferred the shorter Hebrew Canon of Scripture.

THIS DECISION HAD ENORMOUS CONSEQUENCES HISTORICALLY!

The Latin Vulgate

The Inspired Order of the Bible

By
Dr. Judd W. Patton, Professor of Economics
Bellevue University

The Bible contains 66 books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. While there is no doubt or question that the Bible is complete, the entire Word of God, nevertheless there is a question about the actual number of books and their arrangement or order.

Would God design His Word with the mark of man on it? That is, man was created on the sixth day of creation week. Six is the mark of man. This thematic design is seen throughout the Bible. Six and especially sixty-six, which amplifies the element of man, seems, therefore, an unlikely number of books for God to include in His Word.

Sixty-six books, however, is just a hint of a possible problem. The evidence from the Bible itself is that there are in fact forty-nine books of the Bible arranged in seven divisions. **No scripture is lost, or added, by counting them as God does, so don't get shook up!**

The most dramatic concern is that many of the books of the Bible have been "scrambled," so to speak, from the order or arrangement as originally canonized and seen in the earliest manuscripts.

These truths may seem shocking, but they are easily proven. God has, for His own purposes and reasons, permitted this re-arrangement to occur. Nevertheless, the historical evidence and most importantly, the internal evidence of the Bible itself, irrefutably demonstrate the actual number of Bible books and the God-ordained order or sequence of those forty-nine books.

Again, to state our conclusion up front, there are forty-nine books in seven divisions in a God-inspired order. God has put each book in a special position. He did not flip a coin, for example, to decide which book was to be the final one in the Old Testament or which book was to be the first in the New Testament! God could not have designed His Word in a haphazard manner!

That is because God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). The traditional arrangement of the books of the Bible, when contrasted to the Inspired Order, as the author likes to phrase it, will be seen as just that – confusing. The Bible is indeed fitly joined together, God-breathed and ordered.

Throughout this paper the author will refer to the contemporary arrangement of the Bible that all of us are familiar with as the *Traditional Order* and the original God-ordained order as the *Inspired Order*.

This paper seeks to demonstrate and prove this Inspired Order by letting the Bible itself speak about its own order and principles for arrangement. When the correct book order is restored, we'll discover a marvelous and eye-opening series of insights and a series of connected subjects and organizational logic from Genesis to Revelation. All of the teachings in the Bible become clearer and plainer.

The Influence of Jerome

The man most responsible for what became our traditional Bible of sixty-six books was the Catholic theologian, Jerome. His Latin Vulgate translation, written between A.D. 382 and 405, with his "new" arrangement of the books for both the Old and New Testaments, became the standard for Protestant scholars and translators. Of a truth once a tradition becomes established, it is difficult to change. Yet Jerome knew better. He had a rationale, a wrong rationale, for making these changes! Regardless, the Tradition lives on today.

In A.D. 391 Jerome said the following, “**As, then, there are twenty-two elementary characters by means of which we write in Hebrew ... so we reckon twenty-two books, by which, as by the alphabet of the doctrine of God, a righteous man is instructed...**”¹ Yes, Jerome understood that the Hebrew Old Testament contained 22 books coinciding with the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, not 39. And to this day the Jewish translations contain 22 Old Testament books. The books and arrangement or order of the books has never been lost. Even Josephus, in Book 1, Section 8 of his famous work, **Antiquities of the Jews**, recognized “only 22 books.”

Concerning the New Testament, E.W. Bullinger in his Companion Bible made this bold statement: “**Our English Bibles follow the order as given in the Latin Vulgate. This order, therefore, depends on the arbitrary judgment of one man, Jerome. All theories based on this order rest on human authority, and are thus without any true foundation.**”² Dr. Bullinger has hit the nail on the head!

Now, while Jerome is the primary figure responsible for the Traditional arrangement of the books of the Bible, there is more to the historical story. Earnest Martin details other “players” besides Jerome. Briefly, sometime in the second or third centuries A.D., the Septuagint version of the Bible, a Greek translation of the Old Testament, was put into book form by Egyptian Christians, replacing the twenty-two separate and independent scrolls of the Hebrew Bible. Simultaneously they abandoned the Hebrew order of the books or scrolls as maintained at the Temple, and rearranged the books into a more subject-oriented or topical arrangement.³

That is, they grouped the historical books together (**Genesis** through **Esther**). Then the poetic books were placed together (**Job**, **Psalms** and **Proverbs**) followed by the poetic works of Solomon (**Ecclesiastes** and **Song of Solomon**). Finally, the prophetic books were grouped together (**Isaiah** through **Malachi**).

Check it out in your own Bibles. Perhaps some Bible students were unaware of this organizational three-part rationale for this Traditional Bible book order - historical, poetic and prophetic?

Jerome was well aware of both the Hebrew Bible order and the relatively new Septuagint book order in his day.⁴ He had a choice to make. What should he do for his own translation? Well, he decided to use the Septuagint order in his Latin Vulgate version of the Bible. The rest is history, as the saying goes!

The point is that while Judaism did not lose the original Bible arrangement of twenty-two books, Christianity did, primarily through the influence of the Catholic theologian Jerome. Again, the Protestant translators, with few exceptions, relied on the Latin Vulgate version of Jerome in their translations and thereby the Protestant world lost the original book order.

Christ’s Comment on the Hebrew Scriptures

The whole issue about the arrangement of Bible books in the Old Testament is easily resolved. Did Christ reveal His inspired order? Indeed He did!

Turn to Luke 24:44-45. “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the **Law** of Moses and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** concerning me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the scriptures.”

Christ identified the three great divisions of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures in this New Testament passage. The Divisions consist of the **Law** (also called the Torah or Pentateuch), the **Prophets**, and the **Writings**. The latter section begins with the book of Psalms and has also been identified in Judaism as the Hagiographa, meaning inspired writings. **It became known as the Royal Division** since it was written by kings, under the inspiration of God, of course, for priestly rulers and leadership instruction.

See Table 1 of this three-part order or divisions at the conclusion of this paper. Readers are encouraged to refer to the Inspired Order while studying the next section.

The Law, Prophets and the Writings

Romans 3:2 states that, "Unto them (the Jews) were committed the oracles of God." Yes, they were God's instruments in preserving the Old Testament scriptures, and what they have preserved are twenty-two books, from the twenty-two original scrolls. Let's review these books.

The First Division is the **Law** consisting of *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*. As an interesting side-note, the original Hebrew titles of these books were taken from the first verse of each book. Thus, the real God-inspired book titles are: "**In the Beginning**," "**These are the Names**," "**The Lord Called**," "**In the Wilderness**," and "**These are the Words**."⁵

Read these book titles as a sentence. Interesting, isn't it? **The titles give a good sense of the content** and God's purpose for the Torah. The Traditional titles, by contrast, that we have become accustomed to are the Greek titles originating from the Septuagint version, translated into Latin and English thereafter.

The Second Division of the Old Testament is the **Prophets**. It consists of only six books, though there may seem to be many more than that! The first book is *Joshua - Judges*. It is counted as two separate books by Traditional reckoning but only as one in the Hebrew Inspired Order. The second book consists of *1&2 Samuel - 1&2 Kings*. It is one book or scroll known historically as the Book of Kingdoms. Together these two books are known as the Former Prophets because they are the upfront or first books in the Division.

The next three books, *Isaiah, Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, are called the Major Prophets because they are larger in size or contain more pages than the books of the Minor Prophets, not because of importance. Lastly, the Minor Prophets are one book in Hebrew but consist of twelve prophets: *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*. Together, and in that historical, chronological order, they contain roughly the same number of pages as any one of the Major Prophets.

It's also important to distinguish the Latter Prophets, which refer to *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel* and the twelve books of the Minor Prophets, from the Former Prophets, *Joshua-Judges* and the *Book of Kingdoms*.

Finally, the Third Division, according to Christ as recorded in Luke 24:44 and in Hebrew tradition, is the **Psalms**, the first book of the division and undoubtedly the reason Christ used it rather than the "Writings" appellation. All books within this division were composed by kings and leaders like David, Solomon, Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra and Hezekiah and written for kings and priestly rulers. Again, these books contains leadership principles.

The **Hagiographa** consists, then, of eleven books in three sub-categories. These categories include three Poetic or Wisdom books (*Psalms, Proverbs* and *Job*); five Festival Books also called the Megillot (*Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*); and three Restoration Books (*Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and 1&2 Chronicles*).

Count them, please! There are a total of eleven books in the Writings Division with *Ezra-Nehemiah* counted as one book and *1&2 Chronicles* counted as one book.

The five Megillot (meaning scroll) books, as they were called in Hebrew, were designated by Ezra to be read on specific Festival or commemorative days. That is, the **Song of Solomon** was to be read on the Passover. **Ruth** was to be read on the *Feast of Weeks* or *Pentecost*. **Lamentations** was to be read on the tenth day of the month Ab (in August) commemorating the destruction of Solomon's Temple. **Ecclesiastes** was to be read on the *Feast of Tabernacles*, and **Esther** was to be read on the *Feast of Purim*.⁶ Understanding Ezra's directive adds context for the meaning of these annual Festivals or Feast days (see Leviticus 23), these commemorative days (Temple destruction and Purim), and for the books themselves!

There is also a distinct feminine aspect of note to the Megillot books that is significant and readily apparent.⁷ All of the Holy Day and feminine aspects to these five books are lost when the books are scattered and dispersed in our Traditional arrangement of the Old Testament. If God indeed placed these five Megillot books together and inspired Ezra to have them read on specific Festival occasions, which the author is convinced He did, then clearly knowledge and insights are lost by dispersing them throughout the Old Testament.

Quick Comparison

Let's notice some of the similarities and differences between the Traditional 39 books and the Inspired Order of 22 books. First, the similarities: the Law is the same in both orders – Genesis through – *Deuteronomy*, or perhaps more correctly stated as, *In the Beginning* through *These Are the Words*. *Joshua-Judges* is the same in both orders positioned after *Deuteronomy*, though split into two books by the Traditional Order. Likewise, each book within the Minor Prophets are in the same order from Hosea to Malachi, but they are positioned or pulled as a group to the end of the Old Testament and counted as eleven separate books instead of reckoned as one book in the Inspired Order.

Beyond those similarities, Jerome's Septuagint-inspired order really scatters the remainder of the books. The Restoration books are pulled forward and split up with *1 & 2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah* positioned after *2 Kings*, while *Daniel* is positioned just before the Minor Prophets. The Megillot books are widely dispersed, with *Ruth* and *Esther* placed in the Traditional Historical division, *Ecclesiastes* and *Song of Solomon* are grouped together after *Proverbs* in the Traditional Poetic division while *Lamentations*, authored by Jeremiah, is placed within the Major Prophets after the book of Jeremiah. Finally, the Inspired Order poetic books are rearranged so that *Job* precedes *Psalms* and *Proverbs*.

Such are some of the differences caused by replacing the Law, Prophets and *Psalms* divisions in the original Inspired Order of the Bible with three new groupings of the Traditional order: Historical, Poetic and Prophetic books.

With these changes came a loss of spiritual understanding. That's our point! Asking why Malachi, for example, is the last book of the Bible is a nonsense question. Obtaining an answer is really nonsense! Failure to grasp the Festival nature of the five Megillot books, for example, really limits and hides knowledge contained within these books. These examples just indicate the "tip of the iceberg" of the loss of meaning and confusion caused by the Septuagint-inspired order adopted by Jerome.

Fitly Joined Together: Insights Derived from the Inspired Order

Let's notice two examples. First, the Inspired Order is *Psalms, Proverbs, and Job*. It is not *Job, Psalms, and Proverbs*! *Proverbs* concludes with Chapter 31 about the virtuous woman. Then *Job* begins with righteous, upright Job (Job 1:1). What a perfect and logical lead into the book of *Job* and the theme of becoming righteous before God. This fit is lost in the Traditional Order.

What is the last book of the Old Testament? It's *Chronicles*, not *Malachi*. The book of *Chronicles* focuses on the lives and reigns of the righteous line of King David, that is, the Kings of Judah: David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Yet it ends without getting to the King of kings, the King of the Jews, the only truly righteous King, Jesus Christ.

That is where Matthew picks up the incomplete Davidic line by detailing the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David. In Matthew 2:2 he identifies Christ as "King of the Jews." What a beautiful fit! It doesn't exist with *Malachi* as the last book of the Old Testament.

Also, notice how 2 Chronicles 36:23, the last verse of the Old Testament, correlates with and is the perfect lead into New Testament theology. That is, Cyrus, a type of Christ, was given all power (Matthew 28:18) and was commanded to build a house or spiritual temple. That is precisely what Christ is now doing, building the New Testament Church and Temple of God. Is there any question that *Chronicles* is the last book of the Old Testament?

New Testament Order

There is very little argument about the order of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. To quote Dr. Bullinger once again, "***Our English Bibles follow the order as given in the Latin Vulgate. All theories based on this order rest on human authority.***" That's right, on the authority of Jerome!

Scholars generally recognize four Divisions in the New Testament, though some suggest five sections by letting Acts stand alone as a separate division. The four Divisions are: *The Gospels and Acts*, the *General Epistles*, the *Pauline Epistles*, and the *Book of Revelation*. Please notice these Divisions in Table 2 at the end of this paper.

There are just two basic questions to answer about the New Testament order. Do the General Epistles come before or after Paul's epistles? And secondly, where does the book of Hebrews fit, as the tenth book within Paul's Epistles, or as the final book, i.e., the fourteenth? The answers are not difficult to obtain.

In virtually all the early manuscripts the General Epistles precede the Pauline letters or books. The General epistles consist of seven books: *James*, *1 Peter*, *2 Peter*, *1 John*, *2 John*, *3 John*, and *Jude*. And the fourteen books of Paul include *Romans*, *1 Corinthians*, *2 Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, *Colossians*, *1 Thessalonians*, *2 Thessalonians*, *Hebrews*, *1 Timothy*, *2 Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon*.

Here is what Jerome did for his Latin Vulgate version. It is so easy to understand his reasoning.

He left *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, and *Acts* in place, along with *Revelation* as the last book of the Bible. He simply "pulled," as a group, the seven General Epistles down below Paul's letters. And then he "pulled" *Hebrews* down to be the final or 14th book of Paul's letters. His rationale was simply to enhance or give preeminence to Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles and to diminish or reduce the Jewish apostles and simultaneously downgrade Jerusalem relative to Rome. ⁸ After all, Jerome was an early Roman Catholic.

It's just that simple!

Notice the conclusion of Biblical scholar Dr. Scrivener who analyzed over 4,000 New Testament manuscripts: "***Whether copies contain the whole or a part of the sacred volume, the general order of the books is the following: Gospels, Acts, Universal Epistles, Pauline Epistles, Apocalypse.***" These General Letters were not written to specific congregations but were written by the "Jewish" apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude. Jude was a half brother of Jesus.

Quick summary: There are twenty-seven books of the New Testament and twenty-two Old Testament books. Do the math. The Bible contains a grand total of forty-nine books. Forty-nine is seven times seven, reflecting completeness. Moreover, there are a total of seven Divisions within the Bible: The Law, Prophets, Writings, Gospels and Acts, General Epistles, Pauline Epistles, and Revelation. That seems reasonable & complete, with seven, the Biblical number of completeness as God finished His work on the seventh day of creation, the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3).

Logic of the New Testament Order

There is an obvious logic to the New Testament Inspired Order that is easy to spot, especially by any teacher. It is organized in a systematic manner from basic or elementary subjects and doctrines to the “weightier matters” and deeper understanding of Christian doctrine. As the apostle Paul might put it, “From the milk of the Word to the meat of the Word.” This progressive doctrinal approach would not be true in the Traditional order. Quite the contrary as will be seen.

Using an education analogy, ¹⁰ the Gospels and Acts can be likened to elementary school. These five books reveal fundamental Christian Principles as well as the life and works of Christ. Matthew emphasizes Christ as King while Mark’s theme is Christ as servant. Luke emphasizes Christ as Man while John’s theme is Christ as God.

The General Epistles represent or can be likened to the high school level. The General Epistles deal with **faith** (James), **hope** (1 & 2 Peter) and **love** (John). James teaches how to live as a Christian, and Jude concludes the General Epistles by admonishing Christians to contend for the faith once delivered.

Paul’s Epistles, from Romans through Hebrews, can be likened to college level work. Here we see the ABC’s and XYZ’s of Christian doctrine in detail and depth.

By contrast in the Traditional order, Paul’s Epistles are positioned before the General Epistles. Notice, though, in 2 Peter 3:16, Peter tells us that Paul’s epistles contain subject matter that is “hard to understand.” Thus the “hard matters” are positioned before the more basic exposition of love, faith and hope. No teacher would approach any subject or discipline in this manner!

Principle: “To the Jew First”

There is a second reason why the General Epistles must be positioned before Paul’s epistles. In Romans 1:16, Paul states that the gospel of Christ is, “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Likewise, in Acts 13:46 we see Paul and Barnabas telling the Jews that, “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you put it from you...we turn to the Gentiles.”

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13), but he always went to the Jews first whenever he taught (Acts 11:19; 13:14; 14:1; 17:1,10; 18:4; 19:8; 28:17). ¹¹ Even Christ Himself sent His twelve disciples (apostles) to the Jews first. In Matthew 10:5-6 Christ commanded the twelve, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles...but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Surely God had and has an order or priority in preaching the gospel, just as he had in designing His Word. He is consistent. Thus, one would expect the precept “To the Jew first” to be seen in the Inspired Order of the books of the Bible as well. And that is exactly what we discover!

That is, the General Epistles were authored by James, Peter, John and Jude who were commissioned to

preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the Jewish people, as Galatians 2:9 shows. Therefore, the epistles of these Jewish apostles must precede Paul's epistles, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Notice the contrast of the Inspired Order verses the Traditional order.

The very first verse of the book of James validates the principle of going to the Jews first: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, greeting." But Paul's greeting in Romans, his first book begins with, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God...to all that be in Rome" (Romans 1:1,6). To place Paul's epistles prior to the General Epistles is to clearly contradict the Biblical principle of "To the Jew first." The Traditional Order of the Bible by Jerome therefore follows the unbiblical proposition "To the Gentles or Romans first."

Book of Hebrews

Another truth that is readily established is that the book of Hebrews should not be positioned as the last book of the Paul's epistles, and thus the book that precedes the General Epistles. Why?

The historical record, Dr. Bullinger informs us, is that, "***In the best and oldest Codices, Hebrews follows 2 Thessalonians instead of Philemon.***"¹³ Again, the Bible itself removes any doubt.

The first seven books of Paul expound the ABC's and XYZ's of Christian theology, Romans through Colossians. These letters were written to six specific churches with the Corinthians receiving two letters. The seventh church letter, the eighth and ninth of Paul's fourteen, is Thessalonians, which also gets two letters apiece. It is interesting that the letters of the seventh church area address end-time events (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

Bible students know that Christ will return at the seventh trumpet. "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Revelation 11:15).

Let's connect the dots. 1 & 2 Thessalonians, covering the doctrine of the end-times and the second coming of Christ, must logically precede [the same subject in] Hebrews! Hebrews, therefore, follows 2 Thessalonians without a doubt.

Jerome should not have let his prejudice for Rome and Gentiles over Jews prevail in his Latin Vulgate translation by pulling Hebrews to the end of Paul's books.

Once this order is recognized, another small but significant insight emerges. Paul introduces Timothy in the last few verses of Hebrews. "Know that our brother *Timothy* has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly. Greet all those who *rule* over you, and all the saints."

The first letter to Timothy is the book that follows Hebrews in the Inspired Order. Thus, Paul introduces the young minister Timothy at the end of Hebrews and even leads into the book's purpose of ministerial leadership principles and proper rulership. This fit does not occur when Hebrews is shifted to the end of Paul's books, i.e., after Philemon.

One final point, the last four books of Paul's epistles, known as the pastoral epistles, are: *1 Timothy*, *2 Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon*. They obviously go together as books providing ministerial instruction. These four books of the Bible provide information on church government, encouragement to maintain pure doctrine, and principles to be effective leaders in the congregations of God. They are fitly joined together in purpose. By contrast the book of Hebrews is doctrinal in nature, not pastoral. Here is another proof that it does not belong as the last book of the Pauline epistles, as the Traditional Order maintains.

Conclusion

There is indeed an Inspired Order of the books of the Bible. Historical and Biblical evidence reveals that there are forty-nine books divided into seven divisions. These divisions are the Law, Prophets, Writings, Gospels and Acts, General Epistles, Paul’s Epistles and Revelation.

The Traditional order of sixty-six books owes its origin to the ideas and prejudices of Jerome contained in his Latin Vulgate translation. Jerome’s arrangement of the books of the Bible, as shown in this paper, are contrary to the historical record and Biblical precepts that God gives us in His Word.

Earnest Martin had it right: “All the teachings in the Bible become clearer and plainer when the Biblical books are placed back in their correct order. It is truly amazing what the books of the Bible have to tell us when we read the Holy Scriptures in the context that was first intended by God and those who officially canonized the Bible.”¹⁴

Table 1
Inspired Order of the Old Testament:



Table 2
Inspired Order of the New Testament:



¹ Earnest Martin, **Restoring the Original Bible** (Ann Arbor, Michigan: ASK Publications, 1994), p. 20.

² E.W. Bullinger, **The Companion Bible** (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1974), p. 139 (Appendix).

OLD TESTAMENT						NEW TESTAMENT												
OT OLD COVENANT	1 LAW (Torah)	1 LAW (Pentateuch)	Genesis	1	1	1	1	1 GOSPELS	1 GOSPELS	Matthew	1	1	1	1				
			Exodus	2	2	2	2			Mark	2	2	2	2				
			Leviticus	3	3	3	3			Luke	3	3	3	3				
			Numbers	4	4	4	4			John	4	4	4	4				
			Deuteronomy	5	5	5	5			Acts of the Apostles				5	5	5	5	
	2 PROPHETS (Nevi'im)	2 FORMER	3 MAJOR	Joshua	6	1	6	6	3 PAUL TO THE CHURCHES	Romans	6	1	6	6				
				Judges	6	2	7	7		1 Corinthians	7	2	7	7				
				1-2 Samuel	7	3-4	8-9	8		2 Corinthians	8	3	8	8				
		1-2 Kings	7	5-6	10-11	9	Galatians	9		4	9	1						
		Isaiah	8	7	12	10	Ephesians	10		5	10	2						
		Jeremiah	9	8	13	11	Philippians	11		6	11	3						
		Ezekiel	10	9	14	12	Colossians	12		7	12	4						
		Hosea	10	10	15	1	1 Thessalonians	13		8	13	5						
		Joel	11	11	16	2	2 Thessalonians	14		9	14							
		Amos	12	12	17	3	4 PAUL TO THE HEBREWS	Hebrews		15	10	15	6					
	Obadiah	13	13	18	4	5 PAUL TO THE BROTHERS		1 Timothy	16	11	16	7						
	Jonah	14	14	19	5			2 Timothy	17	12	17							
	Micah	15	15	20	6			Titus	19	13	18	1						
	3 WRITINGS (Ketuvim)	5 WISDOM	6 FESTIVAL SCROLLS (Megillot)	Nahum	16	16	21	7	Philemon	19	14	19	2					
				Habakkuk	17	17	22	8	James	20	15	20	3					
				Zephaniah	18	18	23	9	1 Peter	21	16	21	4					
		Haggai	19	19	24	10	2 Peter	22	17	22								
Zechariah		20	20	25	11	1 John	23	18	23	5								
Malachi		21	21	26	12	2 John	24	19	24									
7 REVELATION		7 REVELATION	22 SCROLLS	Daniel	20	13	39	9	3 John	25	20	25						
				Ezra	21	14	40	10	Jude	26	21	26	6					
				Nehemiah	21	15	41	11	4 REVELATION	7 REVELATION	Revelation	27	1	27	7			
				1-2 Chronicles	22	16-17	42-43	12										
3 PARTS	7 SUB-PARTS	22 SCROLLS	22	39 or 43 BOOKS	3 x 12 NAMES	4 PARTS	7 SUB-PARTS	27 SCROLLS								27	27 BOOKS	3 x 7 NAMES

THE 21 EPISTLES OF THE NT					
PAULINE EPISTLES	TO THE CHURCHES	1	1	Romans	1
		2-3	2-3	1-2 Corinthians	2
		4	4	Galatians	3
5		5	Ephesians	4	
6		6	Philippians	5	
7		7	Colossians	6	
8-9		8-9	1-2 Thessalonians	7	
	TO THE HEBREWS	10	1	Hebrews	1
GENERAL EPISTLES	TO THE BROTHERS	11-12	1-2	1-2 Timothy	1
		13	3	Titus	2
		14	4	Philemon	3
		15	1	James	1
		16-17	2-3	1-2 Peter	2
		18-20	4-6	1-2-3 John	3
		21	7	Jude	4

Name	Addressees	Greek	Latin	Abbreviations	
				Full	Min.
Romans	Church at Rome	Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους	<i>Epistola ad Romanos</i>	Rom	Ro
First Corinthians	Church at Corinth	Πρὸς Κορινθίους Α'	<i>Epistola I ad Corinthios</i>	1 Cor	1C
Second Corinthians	Church at Corinth	Πρὸς Κορινθίους Β'	<i>Epistola II ad Corinthios</i>	2 Cor	2C
Galatians	Church at Galatia	Πρὸς Γαλάτας	<i>Epistola ad Galatas</i>	Gal	G
Ephesians	Church at Ephesus	Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους	<i>Epistola ad Ephesios</i>	Eph	E
Philippians	Church at Philippi	Πρὸς Φιλιππησίους	<i>Epistola ad Philippenses</i>	Phil	Phi
Colossians	Church at Colossae	Πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς	<i>Epistola ad Colossenses</i>	Col	C
First Thessalonians	Church at Thessalonica	Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς Α'	<i>Epistola I ad Thessalonicenses</i>	1 Thess	1Th
Second Thessalonians	Church at Thessalonica	Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς Β'	<i>Epistola II ad Thessalonicenses</i>	2 Thess	2Th
Hebrews*	Hebrew Christians	Πρὸς Ἑβραίους	<i>Epistola ad Hebraeus</i>	Heb	H
First Timothy	Saint Timothy	Πρὸς Τιμόθεον Α'	<i>Epistola I ad Timotheum</i>	1 Tim	1T
Second Timothy	Saint Timothy	Πρὸς Τιμόθεον Β'	<i>Epistola II ad Timotheum</i>	2 Tim	2T
Titus	Saint Titus	Πρὸς Τίτον	<i>Epistola ad Titum</i>	Tit	T
Philemon	Saint Philemon	Πρὸς Φιλῆμονα	<i>Epistola ad Philemonem</i>	Philem	P

THE ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE NT											
4 PARTS OF THE NT		CORRECT ORDER	CODEX SINAITICUS	C. VATICANUS C. ALEXANDRIN. C. EPHRAEMI WH, RP-BYZ, ToY	CATHOLIC: VULGATE WYCLIFFE, CPG OTTHR, EBRL, GUTB, MENTL CPLGT, DTBR	BIBLES TODAY, ERASMUS, NA28 APB, Scr4All GREATB, GENEVA KJV, CLNT, GNB NJB, NWT, DBY JSLT, NIV, ESV	LUTHER TYNDALE COVERDALE MATTHEW ZUR, LIESVELT	CODEX TEPLENSIS	YLT	AUGSB	LEV
1	GOSPELS	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt	Mt
		Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk	Mk
		Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk	Lk
		Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn	Jhn
2	ACTS	Acts		Acts	(Acts* since Ref.)	Acts	Acts		Acts	Acts	Acts
3	PAULINE EPISTLES	Rom	Rom	Jm	Rom	Rom	Rom	Rom	Rom	Rev	Jm
		1-2 Cor	1-2 Cor	1-2 Pet	1-2 Cor	1-2 Cor	1-2 Cor	1-2 Cor	1-2 Cor	Jm	1-2 Pet
		Gal	Gal	1-2-3 Jhn	Gal	Gal	Gal	Gal	Gal	1-2 Pet	1-2-3 Jhn
		Eph	Eph	Jude	Eph	Eph	Eph	Eph	Eph	1-2-3 Jhn	Jude
		Phil	Phil	Rom	Phil	Phil	Phil	Phil	Phil	Jude	Rom
		Col	Col	1./2. Kor	Col	Col	Col	Col	Col	Rom	1-2 Cor
		1-2 Thess	1-2 Thess	Gal	1-2 Thess	1-2 Thess	1-2 Thess	1-2 Thess	1-2 Thess	1-2 Cor	Gal
		Heb	Heb	Eph	1-2 Tim	1-2 Tim	1-2 Tim	1-2 Tim	1-2 Tim	Gal	Eph
		1-2 Tim	1-2 Tim	Phil	Tit	Tit	Tit	Tit	Tit	Eph	Phil
		Phlm	Phlm	Col	Phlm	Phlm	Phlm	Phlm	Phlm	Phil	Col
4	GENERAL	Jm	Acts	Heb	Acts* before Ref.	Jm	1-2 Pet	1-2-3 Jhn	Jm	1-2 Thess	1-2 Tim
		1-2 Pet	Jm	1-2 Tim	Jm	1-2 Pet	1-2 Pet	1-2 Pet	1-2 Pet	1-2 Tim	Tit
		1-2-3 Jhn	1-2 Pet	Tit	1-2 Pet	1-2-3 Jhn	1-2-3 Jhn	1-2-3 Jhn	1-2-3 Jhn	Tit	Phlm
		Jude	1-2-3 Jhn	Phlm	1-2-3 Jhn	Jude	Jude	Jude	Jude	Phlm	Heb
									Acts		

Abbreviations: APB 2003 Apostolic Bible Polyglot (Interlinear). AUGSB 1350 Augsburg Bible (German). C. Codex. C.ALEXANDRINUS (5th century). C.SINAITICUS and C.VATICANUS (4th century). C.TEPLENSIS 1390 (German). CLNT 1926 Concordant Literal NT. CPG 1441 Cod.Pal.Germ 23 (German). CPLGT 1514 Complutense Polyglot. COVERDALE Bible 1535. DBY 1867 Darby Bible. DTBR 1534-1540 Dieterberger (German). EBRL 1464 Eberler-Bible (German). ESV 2001 English Standard Version. GENEVA Bible 1557. GNB 1966 Good News Bible. GREATB 1539 Great Bible. GUTB 1452 Gutenberg Bible (Latin). JSLT 1876 Julia Smith Literal Translation. KJV 1611 King James Version. LEV 2016 Literal English Version. LIESVELT Bible 1535 (Dutch). LUTHER Bible 1522-1534. MATTHEW Bible 1537. MENTL 1466 Mentlein Bible (German). NA28 Nestle-Aland 28th Ed. (Greek). NIV 1978 New International Version. NJB 1985 New Jerusalem Bible (Catholic). NWT 1950 New World Translation of Jehovah's Witnesses. OTTHR 1425-30 Ottheinrich-Bible (German). RP-BYZ 2005 Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine Textform. ERASMUS 1516 Textus Receptus (Greek). Scr4All Scripture-4-All (Interlinear). ToY 2012 Testimony of Yeshua. TYNDALE Bible 1525. WH 1881 Westcott and Hort (Greek). WYCLIFFE Bible 1382-1395. YLT 1862 Young's Literal Translation. ZUR 1531 Zurich Bible = Froschauer-Bible (German).
*Acts: In the VULGATE 382 AD and in many Catholic Bible translations: Before the Reformation (1517); Acts after the 14 Pauline Epistles; Since the Reformation: Acts after the Gospels and before Romans.

THE BIBLE - THE 49 SCROLLS WITH THE 70 BOOKS										
THE BIBLE	OT (Tanakh)	1 LAW (Torah)	1 LAW (Pentateuch)	Genesis	1	1	1	1	1	
				Exodus	2	2	2	2	2	
				Leviticus	3	3	3	3	3	
				Numbers	4	4	4	4	4	
				Deuteronomy	5	5	5	5	5	
		2 PROPHETS (Nevi'im)	2 FORMER	Joshua	6	6	1	6	6	
				Judges	7	7	2	7	7	
				1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	7	8-9 10-11	8-9 10-11	3-4 5-6	8-9 10-11	
			3 MAJOR	Isaiah	8	12	12	7	12	10
				Jeremiah	9	13	13	8	13	11
	Ezekiel			10	14	14	9	14	12	
	4 MINOR		Hosea	11	15	15	10	15	1	
			Joel		16	16	11	16	2	
			Amos		17	17	12	17	3	
			Obadiah		18	18	13	18	4	
		Jonah	19		19	14	19	5		
		Micah	20		20	15	20	6		
		Nahum	21		21	16	21	7		
	Habakkuk	22	22	17	22	8				
	Zephaniah	1	23	18	23	9				
	Haggai	2	24	19	24	10				
	Zechariah	3	25	20	25	11				
Malachi	4	26	21	26	12					
3 WRITINGS (Ketuvim)	5 WISDOM	Psalms (5)	12	5	27	1-5	27-31	1		
		Proverbs	13	6	28	6	32	2		
		Job	14	7	29	7	33	3		
	6 FESTIVAL SCROLLS (Megillot)	Song of Songs	15	8	30	8	34	4		
		Ruth	16	9	31	9	35	5		
		Lamentations	17	10	32	10	36	6		
		Ecclesiastes	18	11	33	11	37	7		
7 REVELATION	Esther	19	12	34	12	38	8			
	Daniel	20	13	35	13	39	9			
	Ezra	21	14	36	14	40	10			
	Nehemiah	21	15	37	15	41	11			
1-2 Chronicles	22	16-17	38-39	16-17	42-43	12				
NT	4 GOSPELS	1 GOSPELS	Matthew	1	18	40	1	44	1	
			Mark	2	19	41	2	45	2	
			Luke	3	20	42	3	46	3	
			John	4	21	43	4	47	4	
	5 ACTS	2 ACTS	Acts of the Apostles	5	22	44	5	48	5	
	6 EPISTLES	3 PAUL TO THE CHURCHES	Romans	6	1	45	1	49	6	
			1-2 Corinthians	7-8	2-3	46-47	2-3	50-51	7	
			Galatians	9	4	48	4	52	1	
			Ephesians	10	5	49	5	53	2	
			Philippians	11	6	50	6	54	3	
			Colossians	12	7	51	7	55	4	
		1-2 Thessalonians	13-14	8-9	52-53	8-9	56-57	5		
	4 PAUL TO THE HEBREWS	Hebrews	15	10	54	10	58	6		
	5 PAUL TO THE BROTHERS	1-2 Timothy	16-17	11-12	55-56	11-12	59-60	7		
		Titus	18	13	57	13	61	1		
Philemon		19	14	58	14	62	2			
James		20	15	59	15	63	3			
6 GENERAL EPISTLES	1-2 Peter	21-22	16-17	60-61	16-17	64-65	4			
	1-2-3 John Jude	23-25 26	18-20 21	62-64 65	18-20 21	66-68 69	5 6			
7 REVELATION	7 REVELATION	Revelation	27	22	66	1	70	7		
1 BIBLE	2 COVENANTS	1 x 7 = 7 PARTS	2 x 7 = 14 SUB-PARTS	7 x 7 = 49 SCROLLS	49 = 22 + 27	66 or 70 (3x22 or 7x10) BOOKS		3x12 +3x7 NAMES		

In conclusion, first, if there was not in the first century an “inspired” order of Old Testament books, there was an implied order implicit from the cross-referencing of first sentences in the early scrolls; Moreover, if there was not an “inspired” order of New Testament books there certainly was an intended order determined by chronology, early canon lists, and derivative internal rationale. Second, from my personal experience, Bible Study in general and reading the Bible from cover-to-cover in specific is much easier by following the first century original order of books – both Old Testament & New. - dllb

