WHO COMPILED THE BIBLE

WHO COMPILED THE BIBLE IS A QUESTION THAT HAS INTRIGUED THEOLOGIANS, HISTORIANS, AND BELIEVERS FOR CENTURIES. THE BIBLE, AS A SACRED TEXT FOR MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD, DID NOT EMERGE OVERNIGHT BUT WAS COMPILED THROUGH A COMPLEX AND GRADUAL PROCESS INVOLVING NUMEROUS INDIVIDUALS, COUNCILS, AND TRADITIONS. UNDERSTANDING WHO COMPILED THE BIBLE REQUIRES EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ITS FORMATION, THE VARIOUS AUTHORS AND EDITORS INVOLVED, AND THE DECISIONS ABOUT WHICH BOOKS WERE INCLUDED OR EXCLUDED. THIS ARTICLE DELVES INTO THE COMPILATION OF THE BIBLE, COVERING THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT DEVELOPMENT, THE ROLE OF EARLY CHURCH COUNCILS, AND THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS. ADDITIONALLY, IT EXAMINES THE CRITERIA USED FOR CANONIZATION AND HOW DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS RECOGNIZE VARYING BIBLICAL CANONS. THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF THESE TOPICS.

- THE FORMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
- THE COMPILATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
- THE ROLE OF EARLY CHURCH COUNCILS
- CRITERIA FOR CANONIZATION
- VARIATIONS IN BIBLICAL CANONS

THE FORMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT, ALSO KNOWN AS THE HEBREW BIBLE, IS THE FIRST PART OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE AND REPRESENTS A COLLECTION OF ANCIENT RELIGIOUS WRITINGS SACRED TO BOTH JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. ITS FORMATION SPANNED SEVERAL CENTURIES, INVOLVING VARIOUS AUTHORS AND EDITORS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEXTS. THE PROCESS OF COMPILING THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS COMPLEX, REFLECTING HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

ORIGINS AND FARLY WRITINGS

THE EARLIEST PORTIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE WRITTEN IN HEBREW, WITH SOME PARTS IN ARAMAIC, DATING BACK TO APPROXIMATELY THE 12TH TO 5TH CENTURIES BCE. THESE TEXTS INCLUDE HISTORICAL NARRATIVES, LAWS, POETRY, AND PROPHETIC WRITINGS. MANY OF THESE WRITINGS WERE INITIALLY TRANSMITTED ORALLY BEFORE BEING RECORDED IN WRITTEN FORM.

COMPILATION AND EDITING

OVER TIME, VARIOUS SCRIBES AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS COMPILED AND EDITED THESE TEXTS TO CREATE COHESIVE BOOKS. SCHOLARS OFTEN ATTRIBUTE THE COMPILATION OF THE TORAH (THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS) TO MULTIPLE SOURCES AND REDACTORS, A PROCESS KNOWN AS THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS. THE FINAL FORM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS SHAPED BY JEWISH SCHOLARS DURING THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD, APPROXIMATELY BETWEEN THE 5TH CENTURY BCE AND 1ST CENTURY CE.

THE SEPTUAGINT AND ITS INFLUENCE

THE SEPTUAGINT, A GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES PRODUCED IN THE 3RD CENTURY BCE, PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE SPREAD AND INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AMONG HELLENISTIC JEWS AND EARLY CHRISTIANS. THIS TRANSLATION ALSO INFLUENCED WHICH BOOKS WERE INCLUDED IN THE CHRISTIAN OLD TESTAMENT.

THE COMPILATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE PORTION OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE THAT DOCUMENTS THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. ITS COMPILATION INVOLVED THE COLLECTION OF LETTERS, GOSPELS, AND OTHER WRITINGS PRODUCED MAINLY IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

AUTHORSHIP AND EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE WRITTEN BY APOSTLES AND EARLY CHURCH LEADERS SUCH AS PAUL, JOHN, PETER, AND OTHERS. THESE WRITINGS INCLUDE FOUR CANONICAL GOSPELS, THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, EPISTLES, AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION. INITIALLY, THESE TEXTS CIRCULATED INDEPENDENTLY AMONG CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

FORMATION OF THE CANON

The process of recognizing which writings belonged in the New Testament canon was gradual. Early Christians used criteria such as apostolic authorship, consistency with Christian doctrine, and widespread usage in worship to determine authoritative books. By the 4th century CE, lists resembling the modern New Testament canon began to emerge.

INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN NEW TESTAMENT COMPILATION

Church fathers such as Athanasius of Alexandria and Councils like the Synod of Hippo (393 CE) played critical roles in affirming the New Testament canon. Their endorsements helped solidify the collection of texts that most Christian traditions accept today.

THE ROLE OF EARLY CHURCH COUNCILS

EARLY CHURCH COUNCILS WERE PIVOTAL IN THE FORMAL RECOGNITION AND COMPILATION OF THE BIBLICAL CANON. THESE GATHERINGS OF BISHOPS AND THEOLOGIANS ADDRESSED DOCTRINAL DISPUTES AND ESTABLISHED AUTHORITATIVE SCRIPTURES FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA AND SUBSEQUENT COUNCILS

While the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE is often mistakenly credited with deciding the biblical canon, its primary focus was on Christological doctrine. However, later councils such as the Synod of Hippo (393 CE) and the Councils of Carthage (397 and 419 CE) explicitly addressed the canon of Scripture.

DECISIONS ON BIBLICAL BOOKS

THESE COUNCILS AFFIRMED THE INCLUSION OF SPECIFIC BOOKS IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS AND REJECTED OTHERS CONSIDERED APOCRYPHAL OR HERETICAL. THEIR DECISIONS HELPED UNIFY CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE AND GUIDED THE PRODUCTION OF OFFICIAL BIBLICAL TEXTS.

CRITERIA FOR CANONIZATION

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION INVOLVED SPECIFIC CRITERIA THAT DETERMINED WHICH WRITINGS WERE ACCEPTED AS SACRED SCRIPTURE. THESE STANDARDS ENSURED THAT THE BIBLE REFLECTED AUTHENTIC TEACHINGS AND WAS SUITABLE FOR LITURGICAL USE.

APOSTOLIC ORIGIN

BOOKS ATTRIBUTED TO THE APOSTLES OR THEIR CLOSE ASSOCIATES HELD GREATER AUTHORITY. THIS CRITERION HELPED DISTINGUISH AUTHENTIC TEACHINGS FROM LATER, NON-APOSTOLIC WRITINGS.

ORTHODOXY AND CONSISTENCY

Writings had to align with established Christian doctrine and theological beliefs. Texts that contradicted core teachings were excluded from the canon.

WIDESPREAD USAGE

BOOKS THAT WERE WIDELY READ AND USED IN EARLY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP AND INSTRUCTION WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE INCLUDED. THIS CRITERION REFLECTED COMMUNAL ACCEPTANCE AND PRACTICAL AUTHORITY.

VARIATIONS IN BIBLICAL CANONS

The question of who compiled the Bible also involves understanding the variations in biblical canons across different Christian traditions. The content of the Bible can differ significantly depending on denominational perspectives.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CANONS

THE JEWISH TANAKH AND THE CHRISTIAN OLD TESTAMENT SHARE MANY BOOKS BUT DIFFER IN ORDER AND INCLUSION. THE CHRISTIAN OLD TESTAMENT OFTEN INCLUDES ADDITIONAL BOOKS KNOWN AS THE DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS, WHICH ARE NOT PART OF THE JEWISH CANON.

PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC, AND ORTHODOX CANONS

CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS VARY IN THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF CERTAIN BOOKS. FOR EXAMPLE:

- THE PROTESTANT BIBLE TYPICALLY EXCLUDES THE DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS, REFERRING TO THEM AS APOCRYPHA.
- THE CATHOLIC BIBLE INCLUDES THESE DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS AS PART OF THE CANON.
- THE EASTERN ORTHODOX BIBLE INCLUDES ADDITIONAL TEXTS BEYOND THE CATHOLIC CANON.

IMPACT ON BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND FAITH

These variations influence theological interpretation, liturgical practice, and biblical scholarship.

Understanding who compiled the Bible necessitates recognizing these differences and the historical processes behind them.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHO IS CREDITED WITH COMPILING THE BIBLE?

THE BIBLE WAS COMPILED OVER CENTURIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS, EDITORS, AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS, RATHER THAN A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL.

WHEN WAS THE BIBLE COMPILED?

THE BIBLE WAS COMPILED OVER MANY CENTURIES, WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS WRITTEN BETWEEN ROUGHLY 1200 BCE AND 100 BCE, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS COMPILED IN THE 1ST AND 2ND CENTURIES CE.

WHICH COUNCILS PLAYED A ROLE IN COMPILING THE BIBLE?

THE COUNCILS OF HIPPO (393 CE) AND CARTHAGE (397 CE) WERE SIGNIFICANT IN DETERMINING THE CANON OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE.

DID ANY PARTICULAR PERSON DECIDE THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE?

No single person decided the books of the Bible; its canon emerged through consensus among early Christian leaders and communities.

WHO DECIDED WHICH BOOKS WERE INCLUDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

EARLY CHURCH LEADERS AND COUNCILS, SUCH AS THOSE IN THE 4TH CENTURY, DECIDED ON THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON BASED ON APOSTOLIC AUTHORSHIP AND WIDESPREAD USAGE.

How was the OLD TESTAMENT COMPILED?

THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS COMPILED BY JEWISH RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS OVER CENTURIES, BASED ON SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED SACRED WITHIN JUDAISM.

WHAT ROLE DID RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAVE IN COMPILING THE BIBLE?

RELIGIOUS LEADERS HELPED PRESERVE, EDIT, AND AUTHENTICATE TEXTS, CONTRIBUTING TO WHICH BOOKS WERE ACCEPTED AS CANONICAL IN THE BIBLE.

IS THE BIBLE THE SAME ACROSS ALL CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS?

No, DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS HAVE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT BIBLICAL CANONS, REFLECTING VARIATIONS IN WHICH BOOKS THEY ACCEPT AS SCRIPTURE.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Who Wrote the Bible? Exploring the Origins of Scripture

THIS BOOK DELVES INTO THE HISTORICAL AND SCHOLARLY RESEARCH SURROUNDING THE AUTHORSHIP AND COMPILATION OF THE BIBLE. IT EXAMINES VARIOUS THEORIES ABOUT THE INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR WRITING AND ASSEMBLING THE BIBLICAL TEXTS OVER CENTURIES. THE AUTHOR DISCUSSES HOW RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCED THE FORMATION OF THE BIBLICAL CANON.

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- 3. CANON AND COMMUNITY: WHO DECIDED WHICH BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?
- FOCUSING ON THE CONCEPT OF "CANON," THIS BOOK EXPLORES HOW EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES DETERMINED THE AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS. IT HIGHLIGHTS DEBATES AND DISAGREEMENTS AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS ABOUT WHICH WRITINGS WERE INSPIRED AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED. THE NARRATIVE REVEALS THE SOCIAL AND THEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS BEHIND THE BIBLE'S FINAL COMPOSITION.
- 4. THE BIBLE MAKERS: HOW ANCIENT TEXTS BECAME SACRED SCRIPTURE

THIS TITLE EXPLORES THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE BIBLE'S CREATION, FROM SCRIBES AND TRANSLATORS TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHO SHAPED ITS SACRED STATUS. IT DISCUSSES THE HISTORICAL CONTEXTS THAT INFLUENCED THE SELECTION AND EDITING OF BIBLICAL BOOKS. THE BOOK ALSO COVERS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS THAT SHED LIGHT ON THE BIBLE'S COMPILATION.

5. From Scroll to Scripture: The Formation of the Old and New Testaments

This book provides an in-depth look at the origins of both the Old and New Testaments, focusing on the timeline and processes involved in their assembly. It examines the role of Jewish and Early Christian traditions in preserving and transmitting these texts. The author analyzes how historical events affected which writings were preserved as scripture.

- 6. TEXTS AND TRADITIONS: THE HUMAN HANDS BEHIND THE BIBLE
- HIGHLIGHTING THE HUMAN ELEMENT, THIS BOOK EMPHASIZES THE ROLES OF EDITORS, TRANSLATORS, AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES IN SHAPING THE BIBLE. IT INVESTIGATES HOW ORAL TRADITIONS AND WRITTEN TEXTS MERGED TO FORM THE CANONICAL BIBLE. THE WORK ALSO ADDRESSES THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL POWER ON THE COMPILATION PROCESS.
- 7. THE BIBLE'S HIDDEN AUTHORS: UNDERSTANDING THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

THIS SCHOLARLY YET ACCESSIBLE BOOK INTRODUCES READERS TO THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS, WHICH PROPOSES MULTIPLE SOURCES FOR THE PENTATEUCH. IT EXPLAINS HOW MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM HAS UNCOVERED DIFFERENT STRANDS AND AUTHORS BEHIND THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE. THE AUTHOR DISCUSSES THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FINDINGS FOR UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL AUTHORSHIP.

- 8. Deciding God's Word: The Councils and Controversies That Shaped the Bible
 This book focuses on the pivotal church councils and theological disputes that influenced the Bible's
 canonization. It details the arguments over certain books' inclusion and the eventual agreements reached by
 early Christian leaders. The narrative reveals the political and doctrinal stakes involved in defining scripture.
- 9. SCRIPTURE'S ARCHITECTS: THE PEOPLE WHO COMPILED THE BIBLE

This work profiles key figures who played significant roles in compiling and preserving the Bible, from ancient scribes to influential theologians. It highlights how their decisions and efforts contributed to the Bible as known today. The book combines historical analysis with biographical sketches to bring these architects to life.

Who Compiled The Bible

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'various readings' of the differing manuscripts amount to one hundred and fifty thousand, the impossibility of maintaining the verbal inerrancy of the Bible becomes evident. We see how human ignorance and error have been suffered to mingle with this stream of living water throughout all its course; if our assurance of salvation were made to depend upon our knowledge that every word of the Bible was of divine origin, our hopes of eternal life would be altogether insecure. Newly designed and typeset in a modern 6-by-9-inch format by Waking Lion Press.

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Chinese and English in a book entitled The Proper Aggressiveness of the Lord's Serving Ones. They are included in this volume under the same title. 3. Eight messages given in Taipei, Taiwan, on January 28 through February 1. These messages were previously published in Chinese and English in a book entitled The Fullness of God. They are included in this volume under the same title. 4. Five messages given in Taipei, Taiwan, on April 8 through 12. These messages were previously published in Chinese and English in a five-chapter standalone book entitled On Home Meetings. The contents of this book were taken primarily from outlines and handwritten notes. After the publication of this book in 1986, audio recordings were located that provided a fuller record of the content of Brother Lee's speaking. The edited transcripts of these recordings are included in The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985, volume 1, as chapters 10 through 14 in the section entitled Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 6: Everyone Functioning for the Increase of the Church. These updated chapters replace the contents in the previously published edition of On Home Meetings. Therefore, the chapters printed in The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985, volume 1, are not printed in this volume. 5. Twenty messages given in Taipei, Taiwan, on April 8 through May 3. These messages were previously published in Chinese and English in a book entitled The Vision, Living, and Work of the Lord's Serving Ones. They are included in this volume under the same title. 6. Fourteen messages given in Taipei and Taichung, Taiwan, and Anaheim, California, on April 16 through July 8. These messages were previously published in Chinese and English in a thirteen-chapter book entitled The Propagation of the Gospel and the Administration of the Church. They are included in this volume under the same title. 7. A message given in Taipei, Taiwan, on April 18. This message was translated from Chinese and is included in this volume under the title Fellowship with Elders and Co-workers in Taipei.

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