

# WHAT IS THE BIBLE?



The Bible is in itself a small library of books, all of which emerged from the history of the people of ancient Israel. It is the most influential book in the history of Western and much of Eastern civilization. People have a lot of opinions regarding what it means, but let's just start with what it is.

## OLD TESTAMENT

# Ta NaK

### TORAH

"LAW"

GENESIS  
EXODUS  
LEVITICUS  
NUMBERS  
DEUTERONOMY

### NEVI'IM

"PROPHETS"

JOSHUA  
SAMUEL  
KINGS  
ISAIAH  
JEREMIAH  
ETC.

### KETUVIM

"WRITINGS"

PSALMS  
PROVERBS  
JOB  
RUTH  
CHRONICLES  
ETC.

Written in ancient Hebrew and Aramaic over the span of more than 1000 years, the TaNaK contains 24 books (39 in the Christian count \*). The books emerge from the history of ancient Israel. They tell of their birth as a nation, their history in the land (called Israel-Palestine today), exile from it, return, and their eventual rebuilding around the city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, it is the story of Israel's origin as Abraham's family, how God promised to bless all nations through him via a messianic king—who one day would come.

\* "TaNaK" and "The Old Testament" are identical texts. The difference is in their ordering as well as some of the books being broken into separate volumes. (e.g. 1st & 2nd Chronicles).

# NEW TESTAMENT

27 books emerged out of the movement started by Jesus of Nazareth. All of them were written in Greek by Jewish authors who had become Jesus' disciples.

## GOSPELS

MATTHEW  
MARK  
LUKE  
JOHN

*Four tell the story of his life, death, and resurrection.*

## EPISTLES

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| PAUL        | 13 Letters |
| PETER       | 2 Letters  |
| JOHN        | 3 Letters  |
| JAMES/JACOB | 1 Letter   |
| JUDE        | 1 Letter   |
| ANONYMOUS   | Hebrews    |

*Twenty-one early letters are from the team of leaders Jesus appointed (apostles). They were addressed to communities all over the ancient Roman world, guiding them in their discipleship to Jesus.*

## ACTS

*One recounts the first couple decades of the movement he started.*

## REVELATION

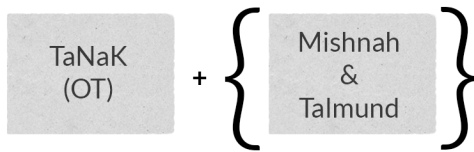
*One is an apocalypse addressed to 7 churches.*



# CANON VARIATIONS

The previous pages list books included in the “standard” Bible or Protestant Bible containing 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament books. Whereas the Hebrew Bible is centered solely on the TaNaK alone, Orthodox and Catholic Bibles include second temple period writings in addition to the Old and New Testaments.

## HEBREW BIBLE



*Orthodox Jews acknowledge the Oral Torah which resulted in additional bodies of authoritative literature.*

## CATHOLIC BIBLE



*DEUTERO-CANONICAL or APOCRYPHAL BOOKS: These are 7 separate Jewish texts from the second temple period and editorial additions made to two other biblical books (Esther and Daniel). They were widely read by Jews during that period and later by Christians as well. In 393 they were recognized as part of the “larger collection” of holy scriptures at the Council of Carthage and later ratified in the 1546 Council of Trent.*

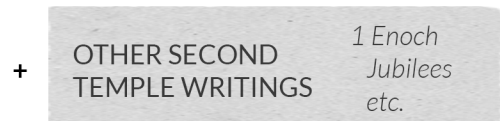


## ORTHODOX BIBLE (Greek)



*Additional second temple period texts existing in Greek.*

## ORTHODOX BIBLE (Ethiopian)



*The Ethiopian “broader” canon includes even more second temple period Jewish texts.*