

Bible Study

Timeline: Biblical Canon	
Date AD	Event
c. 50-100	The New Testament books are written.
140	Marcion, a businessman in Rome, taught that there were two Gods: Yahweh, the cruel God of the Old Testament, and Abba, the kind father of the New Testament. Marcion eliminated the Old Testament as scriptures and, since he was anti-Semitic, kept from the New Testament only 10 letters of Paul and 2/3 of Luke's gospel (he deleted references to Jesus' Jewishness). Marcion's "New Testament", the first to be compiled, forced the mainstream Church to decide on a core canon: the four Gospels and Letters of Paul.
200	The periphery of the canon is not yet determined. According to one list, compiled at Rome c. AD 200 (the Muratorian Canon), the NT consists of the 4 gospels; Acts; 13 letters of Paul (Hebrews is not included); 3 of the 7 General Epistles (1-2 John and Jude); and also the Apocalypse of Peter.
367	The earliest extant list of the books of the NT, in exactly the number and order in which we presently have them, is written by St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in his Festal letter # 39 of 367 A.D..
382	Council of Rome at which Pope Damasus started the process of defining a universal canon for the Church. The New Testament books are listed in their present number and order.
393	The Council of Hippo, which began "arguing it out." Canon proposed by St. Athanasius.
397	The Council of Carthage, which refined the canon for the Western Church, sending it back to Pope Innocent for ratification. In the East, the canonical process was hampered by a number of schisms (esp. within the Church of Antioch).
787	The Ecumenical Council of Nicaea II, which adopted the canon of Carthage. At this point, both the Latin West and the Greek / Byzantine East had the same canon; however, the non-Greek, Monophysite and Nestorian Churches of the East (the Copts, the Ethiopians, the Syrians, the Armenians, the Syro-Malankars, the Chaldeans, and the Malabars) were still left out. But these Churches came together in agreement, in 1442A.D. in Florence.
1227	Bible divided into chapters by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, but not by verses, which were only introduced by Robert Estienne c. 1550.
1442	At the Council of Florence, the entire Church recognized the 27 books. This council confirmed the Roman Catholic Canon of the Bible which Pope Damasus I had published a thousand years earlier. So, by 1439, all orthodox branches of the Church were legally bound to the same canon. This is 100 years before the Reformation.
1536	In his translation of the Bible from Greek into German, Luther removed 4 N.T. books (Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation) and placed them in an appendix saying they were less than canonical.
1546	At the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church reaffirmed once and for all the complete canon. The council also confirmed the inclusion of the Deuterocanonical books which had been a part of the biblical canon since the early Church and was confirmed at the councils of 393 AD, 373, 787 and 1442 AD. At Trent Rome actually dogmatized the canon, making it more than a matter of canon law, which had been the case up to that point, closing it for good.
1551	Bible divided into verses by Robert Estienne (aka Robert Stephens), a Parisian printer, c. 1550