

# Chapter One

(From *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order*  
*A New English Translation*  
*A Faithful Version with Commentary*)

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## About this Bible

You are holding in your hands a **unique** Bible. *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version with Commentary* is the first complete Bible ever published in a single volume to present all the books in their original manuscript order! Of all the billions of Bibles that have been translated, printed and distributed around the world, there has never been a complete Bible—both Old and New Testaments—with the books arranged according to the originally inspired manuscript order.

Prior to his death in January 2002, Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D.—eminent biblical scholar and historian—was for decades the lone “voice in the wilderness” advocating that a complete Bible in its original manuscript order be published. In his 1994 third edition of *Restoring the Original Bible*, he wrote: “**The world has never had a complete Bible of the Old and New Testaments in the original manuscript order of the biblical books. This is a fact!** It is almost unbelievable that such a non-manuscript arrangement of the books of the Bible could exist, but all modern translations of the Holy Scriptures *do not* follow the early manuscripts. Publishers in their quest to print numerous versions of the Bible have been led to avoid the manuscript positioning of the biblical books in favor of an ecclesiastical order which has no justification from the early Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible.... [They] have assiduously neglected to produce a complete Bible which positions the books in the correct manuscript order. The outcome has been a mass of Bible translations and versions which are literally topsy-turvy in their design and arrangement” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, pp. 7, 1; bold emphasis added).

A few have come close, however, such as David Stern’s 2002 *Complete Jewish Bible*. Stern retained the original order of the books of the Old Testament, yet arranged the New Testament in the traditional Catholic/Protestant order. Three published New Testaments follow the original order: Ivan Pannin’s *Greek Numeric New Testament*, 1914; *The New Testament In Its Original Order* by Fred R. Coulter, 2004; and, with the Greek text only, *The New Testament In The Original Greek—Byzantine Textform*, by Robinson and Pierpoint, 2005.

### *Origin of the Incorrect Order of the Books of the Bible*

**The Old Testament:** In all translations of the “Protestant Bible”—such as the *Geneva Version*, the *King James Version* and other versions without the Apocrypha—the first five books of the Old Testament are in the proper manuscript order. However, the remainder of the Old Testament books are arranged in an ecclesiastical order devised by Jerome in the fourth century AD when he translated the Bible into Latin, a version known as the *Latin Vulgate*.

Jerome freely acknowledged that the original manuscript order of the Aaronic/Levitical Old Testament was composed of 22 Hebrew books written on scrolls. (There are 22 books because there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet.) However, Jerome did not wholly follow the inspired order of the books according to the final canonization by the high priest Ezra and the Great Assembly, and preserved by the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood—the *true* custodians of the Old Testament. Instead, he *chose* to follow the order found in the *Septuagint*, an early Greek translation of the third century BC. Its name is from the Latin *septuaginta*, meaning “seventy,” derived from the claim that 70 Jewish scholars assembled in Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 BC) and translated the Old Testament Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek. This Greek version is referred to by the abbreviation *LXX*, which is the Roman numeral for 70. With arrogant “license,” the translators of the *LXX* departed from the original manuscript order of 22 books and *rearranged* the Old Testament to make a total of 39 books. Moreover, they declined to follow the three-fold division of the Law, the Prophets and the

Writings.

Hellenistic Jewish authorities later added 14 books, bringing the final number of books in the *LXX* Greek Old Testament to 53. These additional books—written in Greek by Greek-speaking Jewish religious leaders in the third and second centuries BC—are called the *Apocrypha*, meaning they were of doubtful authorship or authenticity. The Aaronic/Levitical authorities considered these added books to be spurious, as they contain many teachings that are contrary to the Word of God. Moreover, these books were not written in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament. Thus, the apocryphal books were never accepted into the authorized Hebrew canon of the Old Testament.

Martin writes, “Our Christian Old Testament follows an order of books which had its origin in Egypt in the second and third centuries A.D. The order was devised when the codex form for producing books became popular (this is the type of book with which we are familiar today). Before the codex form of making books was used, it was customary to use scrolls for the production of literary documents.... The Jews still demanded the scroll form well into the fifth century [AD]. But the Gentiles in Egypt put the *LXX* into the codex form. When they did, they abandoned the normal [Aaronic/Levitical] Jewish [manuscript] order (which had been maintained in the early temple) and they rearranged the books into a ... [subjective] order. They put the historical books of the Old Testament together in one section, the poetic books in another, and the prophetic books in yet another.... This had an effect of standardizing the text of the Old Testament for Gentile Christian readers. The use of the codex form can give [the] appearance of standardization (it can show a permanent arrangement of books, whereas separate scrolls cannot). [The codex] arrangement gave Jerome a reason for maintaining [the *LXX* order] when he devised his Latin Vulgate version” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, pp. 17-18).

However, there is no question Jerome “*fully understood*” that in the Aaronic/Levitical Scriptures there were originally only 22 books. Of this Jerome himself wrote: “As, then, there are twenty-two elementary characters by means of which we write in Hebrew all we say, and the compass of the human voice is contained within their limits, **so we reckon twenty-two books, by which, as by the alphabet of the doctrine of God**, a righteous man is instructed in tender infancy, and as it were, while still at the breast” (Jerome, *Preface to Samuel and Kings*, NPNF, vol. VI, p. 489, bold emphasis added).

In spite of knowing that the original order consisted of 22 books, Jerome tenaciously retained the *LXX*'s 39 books for the Old Testament as well as the *Apocrypha*'s 14 books. Protestant versions follow Jerome's incorrect arrangement, with some containing the apocryphal books as well.

### Jerome's Rearranged Order of the Old Testament

|                |                   |                     |               |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1) Genesis     | 11) I Kings       | 21) Ecclesiastes    | 31) Obadiah   |
| 2) Exodus      | 12) II Kings      | 22) Song of Solomon | 32) Jonah     |
| 3) Leviticus   | 13) I Chronicles  | 23) Isaiah          | 33) Micah     |
| 4) Numbers     | 14) II Chronicles | 24) Jeremiah        | 34) Nahum     |
| 5) Deuteronomy | 15) Ezra          | 25) Lamentations    | 35) Habakkuk  |
| 6) Joshua      | 16) Nehemiah      | 26) Ezekiel         | 36) Zephaniah |
| 7) Judges      | 17) Esther        | 27) Daniel          | 37) Haggai    |
| 8) Ruth        | 18) Job           | 28) Hosea           | 38) Zechariah |
| 9) I Samuel    | 19) Psalms        | 29) Joel            | 39) Malachi   |
| 10) II Samuel  | 20) Proverbs      | 30) Amos            |               |

With the exception of the Pentateuch, or the Law, the *LXX*'s and Jerome's positioning of the books of the Old Testament has not only broken up the original, inspired manuscript placement of the books, it has **destroyed the God-ordained manuscript divisions** of the Prophets and the Writings. By mixing up the Prophets and the Writings—and especially with the addition of the apocryphal books—Jerome's arrangement of the Old Testament subverts the unity of Scripture between the Old and New Testaments. Genealogical bridges and historical links that serve to join the Old and New Testaments as one book—the God-breathed Scriptures—have become largely lost.

## The Apocryphal Books

- |                       |                                      |                        |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) I Esdras           | 6) Wisdom                            | 11) Bel and the Dragon |
| 2) II Esdras          | 7) Ecclesiasticus                    | 12) Prayer of Manasseh |
| 3) Tobit              | 8) Baruch (with Epistle of Jeremiah) | 13) I Maccabees        |
| 4) Judith             | 9) The Song of Three Children        | 14) II Maccabees       |
| 5) The Rest of Esther | 10) The Story of Susanna             |                        |

Some versions of the *LXX* combine I and II Esdras into one book and divide the two books of Maccabees into four books. Also, the Epistle of Jeremiah is separated from Baruch, making a total of 15 apocryphal books. Such versions contain a total of 53 or 54 books.

**The New Testament:** In an attempt to exalt the religious and political position of the Roman Church, Jerome not only rejected the original order of the Scriptures to follow the order of the *LXX*, he also single-handedly devised a “new” arrangement of the books of the New Testament. To please Rome and the theologians of the Western Empire, Jerome exalted Paul’s position as “apostle to the Gentiles” over the so-called “Jewish” apostles. In so doing, he deliberately placed Paul’s Epistles, beginning with the book of Romans, after the book of Acts—then placed the seven General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude after all of Paul’s fourteen Epistles. (The seven General Epistles are also called *Catholic Epistles*—as the term “catholic” means “general” or “universal”—but is not a reference to the work of any Catholic theologian or the Roman Catholic Church.)

Of this arrangement Martin writes: “Jerome’s new and radical placement of Paul’s Epistles *before* the seven ‘Catholic Epistles’ in his *Latin Vulgate* also placed the book of Romans and the city of Rome ... into a first rank position ahead of the Jewish apostles who once had Jerusalem for their top rank position. This rearrangement by Jerome (to exalt the Gentile section of the Christian Church, and the city of Rome in particular) does not have the slightest justification when one consults the majority of early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.... The textual scholars of the last century knew [and as all current textual scholars know] that this arrangement by Jerome was simply the one preferred by him and it was willfully **devised to exalt the so-called ‘Gentile’ Epistles of the New Testament into a primal position over those which had ‘Jewish’ characteristics....** Jerome’s order of the New Testament books cannot represent the original arrangement and the evidence from the manuscripts demonstrates this abundantly. The truth is, Jerome (along with Augustine who followed him) in adopting his novel arrangement wanted to exalt ‘Rome’ and its theology over the site of ‘Jerusalem’ and over the authority of the eastern churches who were not keen on Rome’s leadership in Christendom” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, pp. 9-10, bold emphasis added).

### Jerome’s Rearranged Order of the New Testament

- |                  |                      |                |                |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1) Matthew       | 8) II Corinthians    | 15) I Timothy  | 22) II Peter   |
| 2) Mark          | 9) Galatians         | 16) II Timothy | 23) I John     |
| 3) Luke          | 10) Ephesians        | 17) Titus      | 24) II John    |
| 4) John          | 11) Philippians      | 18) Philemon   | 25) III John   |
| 5) Acts          | 12) Colossians       | 19) Hebrews    | 26) Jude       |
| 6) Romans        | 13) I Thessalonians  | 20) James      | 27) Revelation |
| 7) I Corinthians | 14) II Thessalonians | 21) I Peter    |                |

The change may not appear critical at first glance. However, because Jerome relegated these small but *vitaly important* Epistles of the apostles James, Peter, John and Jude to a less prominent position, he literally downgraded the importance of Christians keeping the commandments of God. On the one hand, Jerome’s arrangement opened the door for the Roman Church to replace nearly all the commandments of God with its own version of law and tradition. On the other hand, it also set the stage for the development of a “lawless grace” predominant in Protestantism today.

When the 27 books of the New Testament are added to Jerome’s *Latin Vulgate* Old Testament, the total number of books is 80 or 81, depending on the division of the apocryphal books. Protestant Bibles—without the *Apocrypha*—adhere to Jerome’s ecclesiastical order,

having 66 books.

It is astonishing that Jerome *acknowledged* his *scriptural dishonesty* in altering the original God-breathed manuscript order of both the Old and New Testaments. Rather than being faithful to God and His Word, he *chose* to please men—the pope, the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy. In fact, the hierarchy of the Church at Rome was so delighted with his *Latin Vulgate* that not only was Jerome exalted to “sainthood,” but the church declared *Latin* the “sacred language” of the Bible, forbidding other “unworthy” languages to be used in religious rituals.

Thus, in his deliberate mishandling of the Holy Scriptures, Jerome caused **great spiritual harm** to untold numbers of people for over 1500 years. Following in his footsteps, most modern translators have, unfortunately, likewise ignored and rejected the inspired, original manuscript order of the books of the Word of God.

### **The Original Number of Books and Their Manuscript Order in the Old Testament**

***An Unacknowledged Truth About the Old Testament:*** The Old Testament is the Bible used in Judaism, but, technically speaking, it is **not** a Jewish Bible. It is also **not** a Hebrew Bible, although the Old Testament is referred to by both names. Furthermore, though the Old Testament makes up *part* of the Catholic and Protestant Bibles, it is **not** Catholic or Protestant.

If the Old Testament is not Jewish, Hebrew, Catholic or Protestant—just what is it? The Old Testament itself—when carefully analyzed—reveals the answer. The *little realized truth* is this: **The Old Testament is actually an Aaronic/Levitical Bible** written in the Hebrew language for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the twelve tribes of Israel. Why is this significant?

God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian slavery; his brother Aaron was to assist him. Both were descendants of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Moses was the greatest of all the Old Testament priests, prophets and writers because he personally saw God and talked with Him face-to-face. He, alone, **faithfully** wrote God’s spoken words as contained in the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, the Torah, or the Law. As a *type* foreshadowing Jesus Christ, Moses was unique in that he was the personal, direct mediator between God and the children of Israel, as well as ruler, prophet and priest. God *chose* Moses’ brother Aaron, and his sons, to be the priests of Israel. Moreover, God consecrated the tribe of Levi—the Levites—for the service of the tabernacle/temple in assisting the Aaronic priesthood.

When the first five books of the Bible are carefully examined, they demonstrate that what Moses wrote are the actual words of the LORD God. Moses **wrote nothing on his own initiative**, but only conveyed the words God commanded him to write.

Prior to his death, Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy, finalizing the Pentateuch—the five books of the Law. He then gave the original scrolls of the Law, also called *autographs*, to the priests to be placed in special sleeves attached to the side of the Ark of the Covenant. Inside the Ark itself were the two tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments had been written by the finger of God, an *omer* of manna and the rod of Aaron that budded. Thus, the original scrolls of the Law—which Moses faithfully recorded as the Law of God for the children of Israel—were always stored in the Holy of Holies portion of the tabernacle and, later, of the temple in Jerusalem. “And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book until they were finished, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, ‘Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, so that it may be there for a witness against you’ ” (Deut. 31:24-26).

Thus, from the death of Moses **the Aaronic priests and the Levites were made the official custodians of the Word of God**. The Old Testament began with Moses, a Levite, who wrote the Law of God. God then **transferred the Law to the Aaronic priesthood, who were Levites, to safeguard and preserve it**. It was from these original scrolls that faithful copies were made by the priests and Levites for teaching the children of Israel.

Later, God used priests such as Samuel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, descendants of Aaron, to write other books of the Bible. Their writings were “laid up before the Lord.” When Samuel proclaimed the amended covenant for the children of Israel, after God granted their request for a

king, he “wrote *it* in a book [scroll] and laid it up before the LORD” (I Sam. 10:25). However, the writings of other men who were not priests or Levites—such as King David and Solomon, of the tribe of Judah, and many of the prophets—were submitted to the priesthood to be “laid up before the Lord.” When David wrote his first psalm he gave it to Asaph the priest, who was in charge of the Ark of the Covenant when David brought it to Jerusalem and housed it in a tent at the king’s house: “Then on that day David first delivered *this psalm* into the hand of Asaph and his brethren in order to thank the LORD” (I Chron. 16:7).

Thus, important written accounts became part of the prophets, Psalms and historical writings. Ultimately, such writings were officially made a permanent part of the Word of God when Ezra the priest—assisted by the priests and Levites of the Great Assembly or Synagogue—completed the final editing and canonization of the Old Testament Scriptures in the late fifth century BC.

Scriptural evidence pointedly shows that God always used Aaronic priests and the Levites as writers, editors and custodians of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament. Indeed, the *Old Testament* is not really a Jewish or Hebrew Bible—or a Catholic/Protestant Old Testament. Rather, the Word of God reveals that **the *Old Testament* is an Aaronic/Levitical Bible written in Hebrew**. From the time of Moses, **God gave the responsibility for preserving and canonizing the Old Testament to the Aaronic priesthood and Levites**, which was finished by Ezra, an Aaronic priest. Remember, God never allotted this responsibility to the Jews of the tribe of Judah. (See “A Summary of the Transmission of the Aaronic/Levitical Old Testament Text and Other Versions,” p. 96).

***The Original Number of Books in the Old Testament:*** With the final canonization of the Old Testament, Ezra and the Great Assembly compiled the Word of God into its final manuscript order of 22 books. (See Chapter Three, “The Canonization of the Old Testament,” p. 23).

During the latter half of the first century AD, Josephus—a noted Jewish historian and an Aaronic priest of the first course—confirmed that the official number of canonized books in the Old Testament was 22: “We have not a countless number of books, discordant and arranged against each other; but only two and twenty books, containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as divine” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Contra Apion, 1.8:39).

Concerning other witnesses who verified that the number of books in the Old Testament was 22, Martin writes: “There were only 22 books to the standard Old Testament. This numbering can be traced back at least two hundred years before the time of Christ. It is found in the Book of Jubilees. Though Jubilees apparently represents the theological opinion of some Jewish sectarians of the Dead Sea community (or in sympathy with them), the information in the book still reflects a great deal of the normal Jewish sentiment. This is especially true when the author [of Jubilees] made a simple statement that the Old Testament canon was reckoned as 22 books in number. Indeed, there was a special reason *why* the books had to be 22 as far as the author of Jubilees was concerned.

“Annotated to the restored text of Jubilees 2:23 is the remark that God made 22 things on the six days of creation. These 22 events paralleled the 22 generations from Adam to Jacob, the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the 22 books of the Holy Scripture. Professor R. H. Charles maintained that this information concerning the 22 books should be retained in the text.... See Charles’ note on Jubilees 2:23, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, II, p. 15. Cf. Kaufman Kohler, ‘Book of Jubilees,’ *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VII (New York: 1907), p. 302. Thus, as early as the year 150 B.C., it was common for Jews to reckon the Old Testament books as being 22 in number” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, p. 57).

“When God wished to give his complete Old Testament revelation to humanity, that divine canon was presented in 22 authorized books.... ‘As with the Hebrew there are twenty-two letters, in which all that can be said and written is comprehended, so there are twenty-two books in which are contained all that can be known and uttered of divine things’ ” (William H. Green, *A General Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. I, p. 87).

“There can really be no doubt that the number of Old Testament books that were canonized by Ezra the priest was reckoned as 22 in number. Indeed, there is an abundance of evidence from later Christian scholars that this official number of books was certainly correct” (Ibid., p. 58).

Below is a listing of twenty-two Christian scholars, from 170 AD to 1300 AD, who affirmed that the Old Testament had 22 books in its authorized canon:

- |                                    |                                       |                                                                  |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Melito, 170                     | 8) Epiphanius, 400                    | 15) Nicephorus, 9th century                                      |
| 2) Origen, 210                     | 9) Rufinus, 410                       | 16) Jesudad of Hadad, 852                                        |
| 3) Hilary of Poitiers, 360         | 10) Jerome, 410                       | 17) Hrabanus, 9th century                                        |
| 4) Athanasius, 365                 | 11) Synopsis of Sacred Scripture, 500 | 18) Moses of Chorene, 1000                                       |
| 5) Council of Laodicea, 343-391    | 12) Isidore of Seville, 600           | 19) Peter of Cluny, 1150                                         |
| 6) Cyril of Jerusalem, 386 century | 13) Leontius, 610                     | 20) John of Salibury, 1180                                       |
| 7) Gregory of Nazianzus            | 14) John of Damascus                  | 21) Hugh of St. Victor, 12th century                             |
|                                    |                                       | 22) Richard of St. Victor, 13th century<br>(Ibid., pages 58-60). |

### ***The Original Order of the Old Testament Books***

The 39 books of the Old Testament—as found in most versions today—comprise the entire Old Testament. The difference in numbering between the 39 books and the original number of 22 books lies in how Ezra grouped the books and how they were counted in the Tripartite Division of the Old Testament. The three-part division of the Old Testament is: 1) The Law, 2) The Prophets, and 3) The Writings (also known as the “Psalms” because the book of Psalms is listed first in this division).

### **Original Manuscript Order and Number of the Books of the Canonized Old Testament**

#### **THE LAW**

- 1) Genesis
- 2) Exodus
- 3) Leviticus
- 4) Numbers
- 5) Deuteronomy

#### **THE PROPHETS**

*The Former Prophets:*

- 6) Joshua, Judges (one book)
- 7) The Book of the Kingdoms I, II Samuel and I, II Kings (one book)

*The Latter Prophets:*

- 8) Isaiah
- 9) Jeremiah
- 10) Ezekiel
- 11) The Twelve Minor Prophets (one book)

#### **THE WRITINGS**

- 12) Psalms
- 13) Proverbs
- 14) Job
- 15) Song of Songs
- 16) Ruth
- 17) Lamentations
- 18) Ecclesiastes
- 19) Esther
- 20) Daniel
- 21) Ezra, Nehemiah (one book)
- 22) The Book of Chronicles I, II Chronicles (one book)

Jesus Himself fully endorsed this three-fold division (Luke 24:44-46).

After Ezra died, the Great Assembly—which assisted Ezra in his canonization of the Old Testament—remained the supreme religious authority in Judea for over 100 years. Under their guidance a few minor additions were made to the genealogical tables of the important priestly families down to the time of Alexander the Great in 331 BC (Neh. 12:11, 22).

### ***Non-Canonical Books Mentioned in the Old Testament***

Several books are mentioned in the Old Testament which did *not* become a part of Ezra’s final canon. They are sometimes called the “lost books” of the Bible.

|                                            |                                |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>The Book of the Wars of the Lord</i>    | (Numbers 21:14)                |
| <i>The Book of Jasher</i>                  | (Joshua 10:13; II Samuel 1:18) |
| <i>The Book of the Acts of Solomon</i>     | (I Kings 11:41)                |
| <i>The Book of Nathan the Prophet</i>      | (I Chronicles 29:29)           |
| <i>The Book of Gad the Seer</i>            | (I Chronicles 29:29)           |
| <i>The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shiloite</i> | (II Chronicles 9:29)           |
| <i>The Visions of Iddo the Seer</i>        | (II Chronicles 9:29)           |
| <i>The Book of Shemaiah the Prophet</i>    | (II Chronicles 12:15)          |
| <i>The Book of Jehu the Son of Hanani</i>  | (II Chronicles 20:34)          |
| <i>The Sayings of Hosai</i>                | (II Chronicles 33:19)          |

Of these books Martin writes: “Do these ‘lost books’ belong in the sacred canon of the Old Testament? They do not. The last seven of these ten books were referred to by Ezra in the Book of Chronicles, and it was he who was responsible for canonizing the complete Old Testament. He mentioned these historical documents to support the truth of what he wrote in the Book of Chronicles, but he did not include any of them as part of the divine Scripture. Had he wanted them in the canon, he could easily have placed one or all of them within the divine collection. He did not. These books were simply books of history which contained truthful records of the past ... but Ezra did not accord them divine status. This is significant. If Ezra did not reckon them as canonical, neither should anyone else who respects the office of Ezra and the Great Assembly. This is the case with all other books mentioned in the Old Testament and not found within the present biblical canon” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, pp. 182-183).

With Ezra’s final God inspired canonization, the Aaronic/Levitical Bible—known today as the Old Testament—was complete. However, that is only half of the story. The New Testament was yet to be written. And only then would the Word of God—the Holy Bible—be complete.

### **The Original Order of Books in the New Testament**

Although Jerome changed the order of the canonical New Testament books, he did not alter their number by adding extra books or by dividing existing books into two or more parts as he and the *LXX* translators had done with the Old Testament. However, he switched the original placement of the seven General Epistles (also known as “Catholic Epistles” or “Universal Epistles,” meaning they were distributed to all the known churches in the world at the time they were written). He moved them from their original manuscript order after the book of Acts and repositioned them after the fourteen Epistles of the apostle Paul and before the book of Revelation.

As with the Old Testament, Jerome understood the original manuscript order of the New Testament books. Martin writes: “This proper manuscript order ... was even acknowledged by Jerome himself, yet in a personal letter to his friend Paulinus, Jerome followed an order peculiar to Epiphanius who even placed Paul’s letters right after the four Gospels (Lardner, vol. IV, pp. 437, 438). This oddity of order is also found in the *Sinaiticus* manuscript and [is] plainly unlike the order of the original manuscripts...” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, p. 12).

**Original Order Well Known:** It is an established fact that from ancient times the vast majority of biblical scholars have been fully aware of the original manuscript order of the New Testament books. “Almost all the Greek-speaking ecclesiastical authorities from the areas of Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece refer to the books of the New Testament and they do so in the proper manuscript arrangement. [In] all cases they position the seven ‘Catholic Epistles’ (from James to Jude) *before* those of the apostle Paul.

“Athanasius said the order was ‘the four Gospels; the Acts of the Apostles; the seven General Epistles; the fourteen epistles of St. Paul; and the Revelation of John.’

“Leontius of Byzantium mentioned the order as ‘Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the Acts of the Apostles; the seven Catholic Epistles; the Epistles of Paul; and the Apocalypse [or Revelation]’” (Horne, *Introduction*, vol. IV, p. 253).

Martin adds: “Philastris was even bold in his statement that the seven Catholic Epistles must be positioned before Paul’s because in Galatians 1:17 Paul said that the Jewish apostles were ‘before me’ (Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, p. 13)” (Martin,

*Restoring the Original Bible*, p. 11).

In his book, *The New Testament In The Original Greek*, Maurice A. Robinson writes this concerning the order of the canonical books: “Individual manuscripts present the New Testament books in various arrangements; nevertheless, a particular Greek ‘canonical order’ seems to have been popular during the early transmissional history. This order is partially evidenced within various early papyri and manuscripts, and occurs in the fourth-century Festal Letter of Athanasius (AD 367) and the list of the canonical books attributed to the Laodicean Council (AD 360/363).

“According to the ‘canonical order,’ the New Testament books are grouped as follows: Gospels, Acts and General Epistles, Pauline Epistles and Revelation. The individual books within each category follow the familiar order, except that in the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews stands between Second Thessalonians and First Timothy [which is the correct order], intentionally separating Paul’s local church epistles from those written to individuals” (Robinson and Pierpoint, *The New Testament In The Original Greek*, 2005, pp. xvi-xvii). (See “A Summary of the Transmission of the Greek New Testament Text,” pages 100-101.)

### **Original Manuscript Order and Number of the Books of the Canonized New Testament**

| <b>GOSPELS/ACTS</b> | <b>GENERAL EPISTLES</b> | <b>EPISTLES OF PAUL</b> | <b>REVELATION</b>    |                 |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Matthew          | 6) James                | 13) Romans              | 20) I Thessalonians  | 27) The Book of |
| 2) Mark             | 7) I Peter              | 14) I Corinthians       | 21) II Thessalonians | the Revelation  |
| 3) Luke             | 8) II Peter             | 15) II Corinthians      | 22) Hebrews          | of Jesus Christ |
| 4) John             | 9) I John               | 16) Galatians           | 23) I Timothy        |                 |
| 5) Acts of the      | 10) II John             | 17) Ephesians           | 24) II Timothy       |                 |
| Apostles            | 11) III John            | 18) Philippians         | 25) Titus            |                 |
|                     | 12) Jude                | 19) Colossians          | 26) Philemon         |                 |

It is interesting to note that the book of Hebrews—falling between Paul’s Church Epistles and his letters to individuals—is number 22 in the original New Testament canon. As we have seen, the number 22 is uniquely associated with the Hebrew language and the nation of Israel.

Now that the integrity of the original, God-breathed manuscript order and number of the books in the complete Bible—Old and New Testaments—has been established, we know that the true total number of books is 49. The 22 books of the Old Testament, plus the 27 books of the New Testament makes a total of 49 books. This Bible, *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order—A Faithful Version with Commentary*, is the first complete Holy Bible to be printed in a single volume with the Old and New Testaments books arranged in their original manuscript order. Thus, it becomes the “Original Bible Restored,” making it unique among the billions of Bibles around the world.

In the following chapter, we will demonstrate how the original order and number of books are distinct proof of “God’s Divine Design of the Holy Bible.”

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**William Tyndale**  
**“Father of the English Bible”**

**The William Tyndale Memorial at Victoria Embankment Gardens—in London, England**



*“William Tyndale (1494-1536) was the **first person to translate the Bible into English** from its original Greek and Hebrew and the **first to print the Bible in English**, which he did in exile. Giving the laity access to the Word of God outraged the clerical establishment in England: he was condemned, hunted, and eventually murdered [martyred]. However, **his masterly translation formed the basis of all English Bibles**—including the ‘King James Bible,’ many of whose finest passages were taken unchanged, though unacknowledged, from Tyndale’s work” (Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, dust jacket; bold emphasis added).*