

## Did the Catholic Church outlaw the Bible?

Not the actual Bible. It did prohibit the use of flawed translations, such as:

1. Translations containing error.
  - a. Missing verses;
  - b. Poor translation;
  - c. Multiple typographical errors;
  - d. Altered verses to support heresy.
2. Those containing notes, commentary and prologues which taught heresy or flawed explanations.
  - a. The translation may have been fairly accurate, but the added comments by the publisher were often very flawed or intentionally misleading.
3. A Bible published by a heretical group.
  - a. Commonly slanted and altered to refute the Catholic Church.
4. Unauthorized versions of the Bible.
  - a. Published by people without adequate education, training or editing;
  - b. An approved translation already existed in the local language.

There are noncontroversial reasons most people did not own or read the bible before the 16<sup>th</sup> Century:

1. Bibles were very expensive.
  - a. Parchment was very costly and Bibles often contained beautiful artwork, precious stones and gold.
    - i. Some were even chained to the pulpits of Churches to prevent theft.
2. Bibles were rare until the invention of the printing press.
  - a. Hand copying was a very meticulous process and therefore, slow.
3. For hundreds of years, most people were illiterate.
  - a. The Church printed the Bible in Latin because those who could read, read Latin and those who could not read Latin, could not read anything.

## The List of People Executed by the Catholic Church for Violations Regarding the Bible:

It is often said that Jan Hus, William Tyndale and numerous others were burned at the stake or otherwise executed or punished because they produced or owned a Bible in a language other than Latin, but this is not true.

- Jan Hus was executed by the Emperor of Germany for political reasons after the Church's Council of Constance requested that he be spared from execution.
- William Tyndale was executed by those loyal to Henry VIII, who had already separated from the Catholic Church and started his own Church of England. Tyndale's execution was not the result of a Catholic tribunal.

Like Hus and Tyndale, others also met their demise after being declared heretics or who were otherwise disassociated with the Catholic Church, but in each case, there were more secular reasons for their death, such as financial, legal, political and other reasons totally unrelated to any religion, much less the Catholic Church.

Also, in each case, the executions were carried out by secular governments or other non-religious bodies, not the Catholic Church, bishops or priests.

Stories of executions, bans, Bible burning and other efforts to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people are not as accurate as you have been led to believe. To the contrary, you have a Bible today because the Catholic Church compiled the books, translated them, protected them from destruction and corruption and read them to the illiterate masses for hundreds of years. Today, the Catholic Church continues to hold to the authentic truth, including the original canon of the Bible the Catholic Church established over 1,600 years ago.

## How We Really Got The Bible:

Learn how Christians compiled the Bible you own today.



*Inspired and inerrant, the Word of God provides nourishment for the Christian life. But you may have wondered how we came to venerate the Word of God given to us in the Bible, when the Bible itself does not tell us, which books actually belong in the Bible.*

Answers to questions... Clarifying information... Refuting common myths.

Start with this pamphlet, but don't stop here. Keep researching the information provided herein. You may be surprised by what you find.

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## The early Christians did not have a Bible.

- Various books of the Bible were being written within a few years after Christ's resurrection, but the New Testament books were not finished until approximately A.D. 100.
- There was no established Bible until about A.D. 400.
- Many Christian writings were written and circulated in the first several hundred years of Christianity that are not included in the Bible but are still considered helpful for learning and understanding Christianity.
- Many other writings such as the Gnostic writings and other heretical texts have long been rejected by the Church.
- The books that would eventually be included in the Bible:
  - Were originally written in several different languages;
  - Contained no spaces between words;
  - Contained no chapters or verses;
  - Were handwritten on papyrus and eventually handwritten on parchment;
  - Were very rare due to the difficulty of hand copying the originals.
  - Were not read by most people because most people were illiterate, nor could they afford the high cost of a copy.
- The Bible has never been limited to only 66 books.
- The original autographs have been lost for centuries, so all we have today are copies of those autographs, the most authentic of which is St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate from A.D. 400.

## We needed a Canon first:

Somebody had to decide which of the many writings belonged in the Bible. That "somebody" is the Catholic Church:

- St. Athanasius, a Catholic Bishop, was one of the very first to list all the books of the Bible in A.D. 367.
  - Origen had listed the 27 New Testament books by A.D. 250, but had not listed the Old Testament books.
- St. Athanasius' list included 27 New Testament books and 46 Old Testament books (the Septuagint), including the Deuterocanonical books, ("Deutero") for a total of 73 books.
- The list compiled by St. Athanasius was accepted, ratified and approved by several Councils of the Catholic Church and several Catholic popes since A.D. 367, such as:
  - Council of Rome in A.D. 382
  - Council of Hippo in A.D. 393
  - Council of Carthage in A.D. 397 and 419
  - Pope Innocent I in A.D. 405
  - Council of Florence in 1442
  - Council of Trent in 1546
- All Christians accepted the 73 books listed by St. Athanasius and approved by the Catholic Church for over 1,000 years, including:
  - Augustine, Jerome, John Wycliffe, Jan Hus...
  - The Gutenberg Bible had all 73 books in 1455;
  - St. Jerome originally excluded the Deutero books, but St. Augustine convinced him to include them in the Latin Vulgate;
  - Some believe a Jewish Council called the Council of Jamnia excluded the Deutero books because they were not originally written in Hebrew. However, in 1947, we began discovering the Dead Sea scrolls which contained some of the Deutero books written in Hebrew. Additionally, historians now believe the Council of Jamnia never occurred.

## So Catholics didn't add any books to the Bible?

That's right. The Catholic Church actually compiled the Bible used by all Christians. But about 500 years ago, Martin Luther started to make some changes.

## What changes did Martin Luther make?

Luther decided the 7 Deuterocanonical books, which some call the Apocryphal books, were not divinely inspired. He did the same with parts of Daniel and Esther. Luther wanted to remove several books of the New Testament, especially James, but eventually agreed to keep all 27 books that the Catholic Church had originally included in the Bible.

## Why did Luther make changes to the Bible?

Luther disagreed with the theology of some of the books he dismissed as well as some of the books he wanted to remove but eventually retained. Maccabees contains very persuasive evidence for the existence of Purgatory and James (which Luther called the epistle of straw) stresses the importance of works in addition to faith. Luther did not claim any divine inspiration for his decisions. He seems to have relied on his opinion and historical reasons such as the Jewish Council of Jamnia in A.D. 70, which likely never took place.

Most people accept the fact that Luther did not show more intelligence, inspiration or scholarly achievement than all the Christians who preceded him in the 1,569 years of the Church up to the time Luther tried to change the Bible.

Why is it so common to hear Protestants dispute the Catholic roots of the Bible? Because to accept the Catholic roots of the Bible is to recognize the authority and wisdom of the Catholic Church.