



# The Divine Library -

## *A Numerical Evaluation*

by

**Ernest L. Martin<sup>1</sup>**

**T**HE BIBLE, FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION, WAS WRITTEN BY AT LEAST 30 individuals within a span of 1400 years. But the various books which make up this “divine codex” have been **placed** within the Bible in a way which few today comprehend.<sup>2</sup> Hardly anyone today understands how the Old and the New Testaments became united to be the complete and the inspired word of God — most notably found within the traditional Bible of the popular King James Version. Today, most Christians acknowledge this representation of the Holy Bible as an inspired book,<sup>3</sup> but few have seen the original divine arrangement of the Bible that witnesses that the Bible has the stamp of completeness and inspired design.<sup>4</sup>

There are some important factors concerning how the Bible is arranged and numbered which indicate a premeditated consideration to its organization and points to a **complete** set of divine literature. One concerns the collection of what we call today the “Old Testament” books. The writers of the New Testament referred to the Hebrew Scriptures over 50 times and not once did they feel compelled to define what they consisted of. This, in itself, indicates that Jesus, and the apostles, received a “canon” of divine literature which was *already* universally recognized as authorized and complete. Even Josephus, the first century Jewish historian of note (who could be said to represent the opinions of most Jewish authorities of his day), spoke in a manner which shows that the complete and finished canon was universally accepted:

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, *C. Ap.*, 1.38).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This essay originally appeared in *The Foundation Commentator* (A Publication of the Foundation for Biblical Research in Pasadena, Calif.), vol. 4, no. 1 (Jan., 1977). Dr. Martin included much of this material in chapter three of his book, *Restoring the Original Bible* (Portland, Ore.: ASK Publications, 1994). It is here updated and revised, with additional comments by Paul R. Finch, March, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> To even say “placed” in a canonical sense means a premeditated activity that had a design in mind in how the books of the bible should be arranged, and not some arbitrary collection various documents after a long process of “gradual acceptance,” as is believed by most scholars today. The Bible is a collection of collections, not independent and isolated pieces of literature that do not relate in a collective way. In other words, the Bible was assembled in deliberate canonizing activities.

<sup>3</sup> Christian affirmation that the biblical revelation is divine and complete is expressed primarily as a matter of faith which is, in turn, ultimately derived from the inspired words of the Bible itself, *e.g.*, “We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand” (Romans 5:2). This author shares this conviction that faith, in the end, must be the final arbiter in what represents the “Word of God.”

<sup>4</sup> There are a number of signs that what is recognized as the Protestant canon of the Bible (represented by the books within the ordinary KJV, RSV, NIV, etc.) is the complete word of God. However, although the contents are complete, the arrangements of the books, how they were divided and counted has departed from the original, which is the subject of this article.

To Josephus, who was an Aaronic priest, the Old Testament scriptures contained only 22 books. These were the official books which were deposited in the Temple and represented the religious constitution of the Jewish people. In no way was Josephus speaking of a canon different from the normal Old Testament books that are normally recognized today.<sup>6</sup>

Special attention should be paid to the fact that the canon of Josephus contained exactly 22 books.<sup>7</sup> This numbering is most significant. Why? Because the external testimony for this numbering has been universally accepted by the majority of ancient authorities.

It is recognized that the New Testament is made up of 27 books. When these are combined with the 22 books of the Old Testament, a remarkable number stares us in the face like a divine revelation: 49 books! This is 7 times 7. The number 7 throughout the Bible uniformly suggests, in a symbolic sense, completion and perfection.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, however, it not only represents perfection, but perfection times perfection.

Note some significant facts about the number 7 in its reference to completeness. The seventh day of the week *completes* the week. The seventh week after Passover *completed* the weeks to Pentecost. The *seventh* month *completed* the Old Testament festival year. The *seventh* year completed the cycle of land-rest. And finally the 49 year period *completed* the cycle culminating in the year of Jubilee.

It is this same theme that is followed in the New Testament. There were the 7 churches of Revelation. The 7 General Epistles. The 14 (2 x 7) epistles in the Pauline collection. The 7 churches of Paul. To this latter reference we have the statement in the Muratorian Canon written about 190 A.D.

The Apostle Paul himself, following the example of John (in the Revelation), wrote by name to seven churches. True, he wrote twice to the Corinthians for their correction, but he shows thereby in the Seven Churches the unity of the Church for John also in Revelation, though he writes to seven churches only, yet speaks to all.<sup>9</sup>

These few indications (and there are many more in the Bible) show that the number 7 symbolized completion. Therefore, how can we ignore such an obvious arrangement that just so happens to fall into place concerning the number and the arrangement of the completed Old and New Testament canons. Not only do we have the product of 7 times 7 (49), but the square of 7 is even more emphatic that the biblical arrangement is complete.

## **The Original Twenty-Two Books of the Hebrew Canon**

The New Testament books are clearly 27 in number. Yet the number of Old Testament books have been variously counted. The 49 books of the entire Bible can only be maintained if, and only if, the Old

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<sup>5</sup> Josephus appears to be comparing the Hebrew canon with that of the Greek Septuagint, which rearranged the traditional ordering of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the numbering. Although Josephus' bible contained the proper number of 22 books, his wording betrays the fact that the Hebrew Bible is arranged in a manner that was by design and "not haphazardly", as could be said of the Septuagint. And his collective "we" sounds like he is speaking on behalf of the entire Jewish community. Not surprisingly, scholars today explain away Josephus' clear testimony as inconclusive for a closed canon even in his day (see Steve Mason, "Josephus and His Twenty-Two Book Canon," *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders, [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002], 110-27).

<sup>6</sup> H. E. Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1904), 178.

<sup>7</sup> Today, the accepted number of Old Testament books in what we call the "Protestant Bible" is 39. In the Jewish canon, it is 24. The question that arises is: was there extra books added? The answer is no! When the ancient authors referred to 22 books they actually meant "scrolls." For instance, the Megilloth (containing the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther), were all contained on one scroll (known as the Festival Scroll) and considered as one book in the numerical counting of scrolls within the Hebrew canon.

<sup>8</sup> The fact that the number seven denotes completeness in the Bible is no stretch. The fact that it is so prominent through both Testaments and consistently used down through the ages by biblical writers is striking in its conspicuousness. Its as if the reader is taunted by this fact from cover to cover. W. Taylor Smith (*Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917], 2:248) reinforces this idea: "Seven often expressed the idea of completeness. So in 7 churches, 7 parables of the Kingdom, the 7 Beatitudes, etc. Even in Assyrian texts it denotes 'totality,' or 'whole'."

<sup>9</sup> Cited from Benjamin Wisner Bacon, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1902), 52.

Testament is acknowledged as containing 22 books, no more, no less. So the quest is, what is the ancient testimony concerning this matter? The reckoning of 22 books can be traced back to at least a century and a half before the time of Jesus. This evidence is found in the *Book of Jubilees* written about 135 B.C.<sup>10</sup> The Jewish Encyclopedia informs us:

Accordingly, the twenty-two works of the six days of Creation are enumerated (ch. ii. 2-22): On the first day: heaven, earth, water, the spirits, the abyss, darkness, and light; on the second: the firmament; on the third: the land, the seas, vegetation, and paradise; on the fourth: sun, moon, and stars; on the fifth: the sea-monsters (Behemoth and Leviathan, “the first things of flesh created by His hands”), the fish, and the birds; on the sixth: the wild and the tame animals, the creeping things, and man; these twenty-two works correspond to the twenty-two generations from Adam to Jacob, as well as to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet and the twenty-two books of Holy Scripture (ch. ii. 23; comp. Midr. Tadshe vi.; Epstein, “Mi-Kadmoniyot ha-Yehudim,” 1887, p. xx.; and Charles, l.c. pp. 11, 18).<sup>11</sup>

To the author(s) of Jubilees there was significance in these relationships: Adam being the twenty-second creation represented the final and most perfect physical creation of God. Jacob was the twenty-second generation from Adam. He was reckoned the final generation which led to the creation of God's spiritual nation. The Hebrew language was also the means for divine communication and its complete letters numbered 22. In reflection to this they believed God's spiritual revelation in that Hebrew tongue was to be found in the 22 books of the Jewish canon.

The Jewish scholar Sixtus Senensis, who lived in the Middle Ages, referred to this symbolic significance:

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.<sup>12</sup>

## **Christians Also Accepted the Twenty-Two Numbering**

While early Jews cite evidence of the Old Testament being numbered as 22 books, they are even outdone by Christian scholars.<sup>13</sup> These writers are here cited in chronological order.

1. *Melito* (170 A.D.), in agreement with the original Jewish reckoning, gave the number of Old Testament books as 22.<sup>14</sup>

2. *Origen* (210 A.D.) affirmed: “It should be stated that the canonical books, as the Hebrews have handed them down, are twenty-two corresponding with the number of their letters.”<sup>15</sup>

3. *Hilary of Poitiers* (ca. 350-365) said, “The Law of the Old Testament is considered as divided into twenty-two books, so as to correspond to the number of [Hebrew] letters.”<sup>16</sup>

4. *Athanasius* (365 A.D.): “There are then of the Old Testament twenty-two books in number ... this is the number of the letters among the Hebrews.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup>. Annotated to the restored text of Jubilees 2:23 is the remark that God made 22 things in the 6 days of creation. It was stated that these paralleled the 22 generations from Adam to Israel, also the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and finally the 22 books of the Holy Scripture. R. H. Charles (*Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913], 2:15, n. 23) restores the text as follows: “as there were twenty-two letters and twenty-two sacred books and twenty-two heads of mankind from Adam to Jacob, so there were made twenty-two kinds of work.”

<sup>11</sup>. Crawford Howell Toy and Kaufmann Kohler, “Jubilees, Book of,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, (New York: 1907), 7:302. This points to a 22 book Hebrew canon as of 135 A. D.

<sup>12</sup>. Quoted from William Henry Green, *General Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 1:87.

<sup>13</sup>. It should be noted that the majority of these witnesses accepted the Jewish canon - the one adopted by general Protestantism today, yet they still reckoned the books as twenty-two in number. This means that they accepted the correct order of the Masoretic tradition and not that of the Septuagint.

<sup>14</sup>. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.12-14, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church [NPNF]. 2nd series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, (Grand Rapids: 1952), 1:206.

<sup>15</sup>. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 6.25.1-14, *ibid.*, 272.

<sup>16</sup>. “Tractatus Super Psalmos,” prologue, 15, *Patrologia Latino*, ed. J.-P. Migne, (Paris: 1844), 9:241.

5. *Council of Laodicea* (343-381 A.D.): twenty-two books.<sup>18</sup>
6. *Cyril of Jerusalem* (386 A.D.): "Read the Divine Scriptures, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament."<sup>19</sup>
7. *Gregory of Nazianzus* (390 A.D.): "I have exhibited twenty-two books, corresponding with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrews."<sup>20</sup>
8. *Epiphanius* (400 A.D.): Twenty-two books.<sup>21</sup>
9. *Rufinus* (410 A.D.): Twenty-two books.<sup>22</sup>
10. *Jerome* (410 A.D.): "That the Hebrews have twenty-two letters is testified... As, then, there are twenty-two elementary characters by means of which we write in Hebrew all we say,... so we reckon twenty-two books by which... a righteous man is instructed..."<sup>23</sup>
11. *Synopsis of Sacred Scripture* (ca. 500 A.D.): "The canonical books of the Old Testament are twenty-two, equal in number to the Hebrew letters; for they have so many original letters."<sup>24</sup>
12. *Isidore of Seville* (600 A.D.) said the Old Testament was settled by Ezra into twenty-two books "that the books in the Law might correspond in number with the letters."<sup>25</sup>
13. *Leontius* (610 A.D.): "Of the Old Testament there are twenty-two books."<sup>26</sup>
14. *John of Damascus* (730 A.D.): "Observe further that there are two and twenty books of the Old Testament, one for each letter of the Hebrew tongue."<sup>27</sup>
15. *Nicephorus* (9th Century A.D.): "There are two and twenty books of the Old Testament."<sup>28</sup>
16. *Jesudad, Bishop of Hadad in Syria* (852 A.D.), recognized a canon of twenty-two books.<sup>29</sup>
17. *Hrabanus* (9th Century A.D.) said the Old Testament was formed by Ezra into twenty-two books "that there might be as many books in the Law as there are letters."<sup>30</sup>
18. *Moses of Chorene* (ca. 1000 A.D.), the Armenian historian, spoke "of twenty-two books of the Old Testament. This was clearly the Jewish Canon."<sup>31</sup>
19. *Peter of Cluny* (1150 A.D.): twenty-two books.<sup>32</sup>
20. *John of Salisbury* (1180 A.D.): twenty-two books.<sup>33</sup>
21. *Hugh of St. Victor* (12th Century): "As there are twenty-two alphabetic letters, by means of which we write in Hebrew, and speak what we have to say... so twenty-two books are reckoned, by means of which... the yet tender infancy of our man is instructed, while it yet hath need of milk."<sup>34</sup>

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17. Letter 39.4, *NPNF*, 4:552.

18. Canon 60, *NPNF*, 14:159.

19. "Catechetical Lectures," 4.33, *NPNF*, 7:26

20. "Carmina, 1.12," *Patrologia Graeco-Latina*, (Paris: 1862), 27:471.

21. "De Mensuris et Ponderibus, 4," *Patrologia Graeco-Latina*, (Paris: 1864), 43:243.

22. "Commentarius in Symbolum Apostolorum," 37, *Patrologia Latino*, (Paris: 1878), 21:373, 374.

23. *Preface to the Books of Samuel and Kings*, *NPNF*, 6:489.

24. Quoted by Moses Stuart, *Critical History and Defence of the Old Testament Canon* (Andover, Mass.: 1827), Appendix X.

25. "Liber de Officiis," *Patrologia Latino*, (Paris: 1862), 82:305.

26. William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture, Against the Papists, Especially Bellarmine and Stapleton* (Cambridge; Printed At the University Press, 1849), 62.

27. John of Damascus, "An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," 4.17, *NPNF*, 9:89.

28. Whitaker, *loc cit.*, 64.

29. John E. Steinmueller, *A Companion to Scripture Studies*, (New York: Joseph F Wagner, Inc., 1941), 1:80.

30. Whitaker, *loc cit.*

31. Steinmueller, *loc. cit.*, 1:81.

22. *Richard of St. Victor* (13th Century): twenty-two books.<sup>35</sup>

These testimonies supply ample evidence that over the centuries — whether in Hebrew circles, Greek Orthodox, Syrian, Armenian, or Roman Catholic ones — the knowledge of 22 books as comprising the Old Testament has been universally recognized.<sup>36</sup> While the order of the Old Testament books sometimes varied among these ecclesiastical scholars (due mainly to their attachment to the Septuagint or other Versions) they still persisted in recognizing the 22 numbering. And though our Protestant canon now comprises 39 books, it is to be recognized that the majority of the above witnesses acknowledged our 39 books as being only 22 in earlier times. This does not show a deficiency, but merely a renumbering.<sup>37</sup>

## The Old Testament — A Type of Acrostic

It could be said that the Jews regarded the 22 books as a type of alphabetic acrostic composing the whole of the Old Testament. In several parts of the Bible, a significant use is made of the acrostic. An acrostic is a feature in which the first letter of a sentence begins with the first letter of the alphabet; the second sentence the second letter; the third sentence the third letter, etc. In complete Hebrew acrostics, there are twenty-two sentences, or multiples of twenty-two, each beginning with the first letter *aleph* and successively going through the entire alphabet until *tau*, the last letter, is reached.

An example of an acrostic is found in Psalm 119. This Psalm, the longest single chapter in the Bible, is beautifully designed. It is divided into 22 sections, each having 8 verses. In its Hebrew original, the first 8 verses all commence with the first Hebrew letter aleph. The second set of 8 uses the second letter beth. And so it goes, all the way through the alphabet.

It should be apparent that there is a purposeful design when acrostics are used in the Bible. When all 22 letters are utilized, either with single verses, or with a series of verses, the author is placing an accent of completeness or perfection on the section of Scripture. This is shown in the subject of Psalm 119. It is a discourse on all the faculties of God's law. Because the author emphasizes throughout the Psalm the perfect and complete law, a perfect acrostic is used to emphasize that completeness.

Another acrostic is found in Psalm 111 and another in Psalm 112. These Psalms were meant to show that God will completely and permanently redeem His people — the ones who are diligently performing His commandments. Complete acrostics are also used in the first three chapters of the Book of Lamentations to emphasize the completeness of God's destruction upon Israel.

One should also mention the beautiful acrostic used in the description of the virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:10-31). The author is accenting the description of the complete and perfect woman.

## An Incomplete Acrostic

So far, we have been discussing only perfect and complete acrostics. The Bible, however, does contain one which is deliberately broken — with certain letters omitted at particular intervals. When

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<sup>32</sup> Edward Reuss, *History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Church* (Edinburgh: James Gemmill, 1884), 257.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>34</sup> "Didascalicae Eruditionis," 4.80, *Patrologia Latino*, (Paris: 1879), 176:739.

<sup>35</sup> "Tractatus Exceptionum," 2.9, *Patrologia Latino*, (Paris: 1879), 177:210.

<sup>36</sup> It should be mentioned that the Old Testament was sometimes divided into 27 books. Epiphanius, for example, counted the books as 22 but on two other occasions he mentioned 27 (*Adversus Octaginta Haereses*, 8.6). This was simply a renumbering from the original because the Hebrew alphabet has 5 letters that took on different shapes at the end of words. Some books were conveniently divided to accommodate this.

<sup>37</sup> The twelve Minor Prophets were always reckoned as one scroll or book in the Hebrew canon. So were some other books, which are now divided according to the Septuagint fashion.

one or more letters are misplaced or left out the impression one gets is that of frustration! Incompleteness!

Such a broken acrostic is found running through Psalms 9 and 10. Seven letters are purposely omitted. This type of acrostic was no doubt intended to emphasize the broken and irregular conditions which will prevail on earth during the period which the two Psalms depict.

All this seems to show that the biblical writers used the acrostical design to accent their writings in various ways. If one wished to stress perfection or completion, a complete and perfect acrostic was used. If the accent was upon irregularity, chaos or destruction, an incomplete acrostic could be used.

Perhaps there was a type of acrostical usage being reflected in the overall design of the Old Testament.<sup>38</sup> There was certainly a historical emphasis on the 22 books being equated with the Hebrew letters. If what we are suggesting is true, the canonizers appear to have adopted this method to show that the Old Testament revelation in Hebrew (using all 22 Hebrew letters) is now complete.<sup>39</sup>

## **The New Testament**

As stated before, the original 22 numbering of the Old Testament books when coupled with the 27 of the New give us a remarkable sum: 49 books. This gives one the impression of completion. 7 itself is the prime number in the Bible for denoting perfection, and 49 is the product of 7 times 7. This would show a double emphasis of completion. There are 7 General Epistles in the New Testament (James, 1, 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude) and 14 (2 X 7) in the Pauline collection (Romans, 1, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I, II Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon).<sup>40</sup> Also Paul wrote to 7 churches: Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. We should also remember the many sevens (or multiples) found in the book of Revelation.

These features continue to reflect a symbol of perfection or completion. The apostle Peter, and later John, the only ones ever authorized for canonizing the New Testament, knew what they were doing in following the tradition of the great canonizing predecessor — Ezra the Scribe.

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<sup>38</sup>. In regard to the Old Testament canon which was originally written in Hebrew characters, it can be seen why the ancients looked on the 22 books of the Hebrew Bible as corresponding to the 22 alphabetic Hebrew letters. When one realizes the significance of the acrostic style for emphasizing a completeness and perfection, it is an easy step to acknowledge that the 22 books of the old Testament canon represent (in a symbolic sense) a complete and perfect canonical acrostic. Figuratively, all the Hebrew letters have been used up. Any further revelation would of necessity have to be in another language. And so, the next addition to the complete canon, the New Testament, had to have been written in another language, which was written in Greek.

<sup>39</sup>. Tradition asserts that the Hebrew canon was accomplished in the days of Ezra (fifth century B.C.), which is further the position of Josephus (*C. Ap.* 1.37-43).

<sup>40</sup>. Note that the book of Hebrews is placed between Thessalonians and Timothy. This is the correct order based upon the earliest manuscripts.

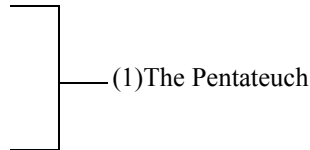
# The OLD TESTAMENT Canon<sup>41</sup>

## AN ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRIPARTITE DIVISIONS<sup>42</sup>

### I. The Law of Moses

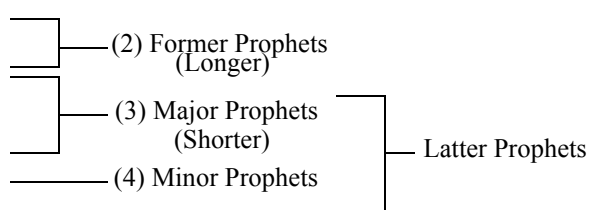
1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

### Seven Parts



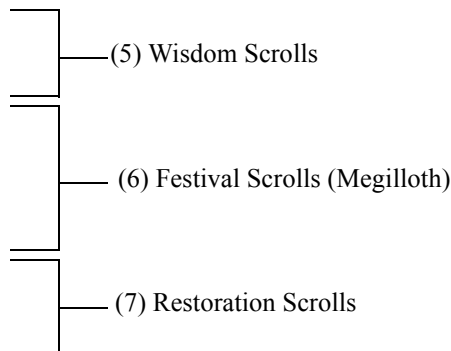
### II. The Prophets<sup>43</sup>

6. Joshua-Judges<sup>44</sup>
7. Book of Kingdoms<sup>45</sup>
8. Isaiah
9. Jeremiah
10. Ezekiel
11. The Twelve<sup>46</sup>



### III. The Psalms (or Writings)<sup>47</sup>

12. Psalms
13. Proverbs
14. Job
15. Song of Songs<sup>48</sup>
16. Ruth
17. Lamentations
18. Ecclesiastes
19. Esther
20. Daniel
21. Ezra-Nehemiah
22. Chronicles<sup>49</sup>



<sup>41</sup>. Luke 24:44,45 indicates that Jesus accepted a threefold partition of the Old Testament, *i.e.*, the 1. Law of Moses [Torah], 2. the Prophets [Nevi'im], and 3. the Psalms books [Ketuvim, *i.e.*, writings].

<sup>42</sup>. This arrangement of the Old Testament books is that of the modern Jewish one, but it also reflects the one most generally accepted by the Jews in the earliest period (Sirach 43:44 - 49:10). In the history of the Jewish canon some books have been shifted in the division of Prophets and Psalms but never from one division to another. The books in the Law division have always remained in the same order.

<sup>43</sup>. The Prophets division has this title because the books were found written by prophets (Acts 3:24) and they were an introduction to the major prophecies of the entire Bible.

<sup>44</sup>. In the 22 numbering the Book of Kingdoms (comprising our Samuel and Kings) is reckoned as one book representing the time when Israel had kings. A relic of this former title is found in the superscriptions to our Samuel and Kings in the King James Version: 1, 2, 3, 4 Book of Kings. The book may have been devised by Isaiah and composed by him until his death (2 Chronicles 32:32).

<sup>45</sup>. In the 22 numbering Joshua-Judges are reckoned as one book representing the time when Israel had no kings.

<sup>46</sup>. The Twelve Minor (Shorter) Prophets [from Hosea to Malachi] were always reckoned as one book [or scroll] by the Hebrews.

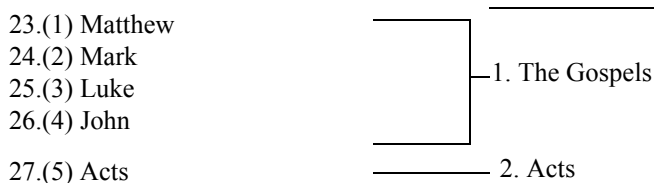
<sup>47</sup>. One of the earliest references to this third division calls it "the works of David, and royal letters about sacred gifts" (2 Maccabees 1:12-15). The Psalms and succeeding books were all "royal" or "kingdom" books. The Psalms were associated with king David; Proverbs, king Solomon; Ruth was a "queen mother"; Lamentations was written in commemoration of king Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:24,25); Ecclesiastes was ascribed to king Solomon; Esther was queen of Persia; Daniel was of the kings' seed (1:3); Ezra was a ruler in Judah and Nehemiah was a ruler of the Jews and probably of royal seed (Neh. 6:5-9). Chronicles is about the fortunes of the kingdom of Judah. Thus, all could be reckoned as "royal" or "kingdom" books!

# The New TESTAMENT Canon<sup>50</sup>

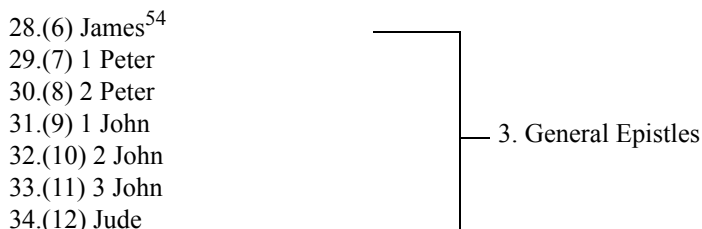
The New Testament contains 27 books. This, coupled with the 22 books of the Old Testament, totals 49 books, a 7 times 7 multiple, pointing to a complete divine revelation.<sup>51</sup>

## IV. The New Testament Pentateuch<sup>52</sup>

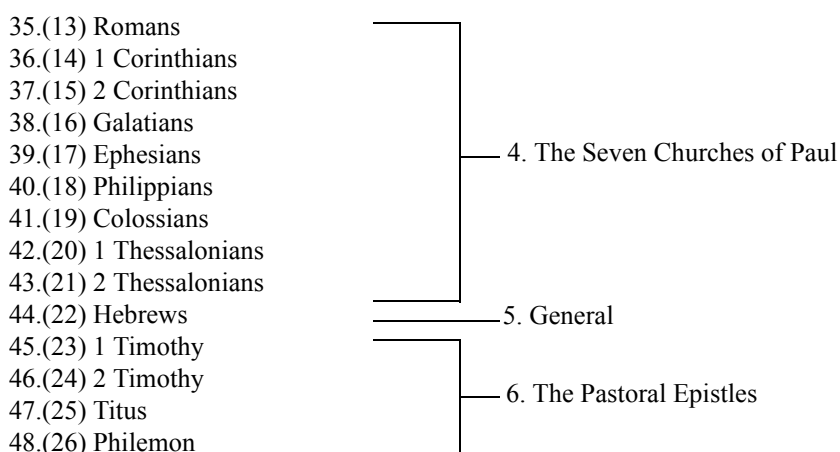
### Seven Parts



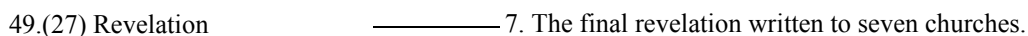
## V. The Seven General Epistles<sup>53</sup>



## VI. The Pauline Collection (14)<sup>55</sup>



## VII. The Prophetic Section



<sup>48.</sup> Song of Songs was read in the Temple at Passover; Ruth at Pentecost; Lamentations on the anniversary of the Temple's destruction (Ab 10); Ecclesiastes at Tabernacles; and Esther at Purim. This custom of reading these five books at these times was probably begun in the time of Ezra (2 Chronicles 35:24,25).

<sup>49.</sup> The three Restoration Books were written during the Gentile period of Israel's history. They all reflect the restoration period of Judah under the Persian period.

<sup>50.</sup> Just before the Apostle Peter's death, he recognized his responsibility to "bind on earth" selected apostolic documents for authoritative instruction for the future church. After Peter's death, the only other Apostle who had the authority to complete the canon (by virtue of what Peter explained in 2 Peter 1:16-19) was John, who then composed a Gospel of his own, and finalized the divine revelation of the New Testament writings. Peter's second epistle is the most important document on New Testament canonization because it explains that he, in his role as the chief apostle, would "not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things" (2 Pet 1:12). What things? The "exceeding great and precious promises" that he referred to in verse 4. He said that he was endeavoring "to have these things ALWAYS in [your] remembrance" and he specifically stated "*after my decease*" (2 Pet 1:15). That's the key that points to a canonization activity on the part of the apostle Peter. He then assembled a collection of works that was designed to last the Church through the coming ages: "until the day dawns, and the day star arises in your hearts" (verse 19). This literature was considered to be as inspired prophetic writings as even the Hebrew Scriptures (verse 20, 21). Indeed, Peter's explanation states that due to the Transfiguration event, he (and James [deceased] and John) had: "the more sure word of prophecy" than even the prophets of old (v. 19). The monumental significance of this epistle on the subject of canonization is totally lost on modern day scholarship which looks blindly in post-apostolic times for canonization activity, ignoring the fact that the apostles themselves foresaw that apostasy within the church was something that they only had to fend off by their own writings and *ONLY they* had the authority to bind together such a collection of divine literature. No one in post-apostolic times ever came close to having such authority — a fact that is totally ignored in scholarly papers.



For more on this subject, see Ernest L. Martin's monumental research: *Restoring the Original Bible* (Portland, Ore: ASK Publications, 1994) obtainable through <http://askelm.com/restoring/index.asp> and Paul R. Finch, *Beyond Acts: New Perspectives in New Testament History* (Palm Bay, Fla.: Sunrise Publication, 2003) listed at <http://www.sunrise-publications.com/>.

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<sup>51</sup>. This number could hardly have been an inconsequential accident. The Bible from beginning to end has the very stamp of completion, organization, and design that is the product of premeditated thought and can not be dismissed, ignored, nor explained away by theories like the “gradual acceptance” theory that dominates scholarly thinking today.

<sup>52</sup>. The four Gospels and Acts are all historical books and belong together. The first four show a history of the ministry of Jesus on earth and Acts after He had ascended to heaven.

<sup>53</sup>. The seven General Epistles appear next after Acts in the oldest manuscript tradition (which is properly *before* those of Paul).

<sup>54</sup>. The four authors of the General Epistles are positioned according to prominence in the Jerusalem church. “James, Cephas [Peter], and John, who seemed to be pillars” (Galatians 2:9). The books are “General” because they were not addressed to specific churches and they gave general (not specific) doctrinal teaching. They were placed before Paul’s collection because these took precedence. “To the Jew first” (Romans 1:16), their authors had seniority over Paul (Galatians 1:17), and they gave a basic introduction to Paul’s more advanced teachings.

<sup>55</sup>. Romans headed the Pauline epistles. The later Catholic Church positioned the Pauline epistles ahead of the Seven General Epistles to place Rome in authority over Jerusalem (M’Clintok and Strong, *Cyclopedia.*, 1:800). Paul wrote to seven churches (to Corinth and Thessalonica twice) to give the “perfection” of “church” teaching (Lardner. *Credibility*, 3:177). The same principle for prophetic teaching is found in the seven churches in Revelation. Paul’s seventh church was Thessalonica and the books discuss the last trump, the second coming, and the resurrection — the fulfillment of last things for the church.