

## THE FORMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A second phase in the study of a piece of literature is the investigation of how it came to be written. Unlike much literature, the Bible was formed over a long period of time. See from the following how the Old Testament came into being:

**A. The Old Testament Begun:** Read Exodus 31:12-18

1. What was the first part of the Bible to be written? Exodus 31:18c, d

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2. By whom was it written? Exodus 31:18

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**B. The Old Testament Continued:** Read Exodus 24:1-8

1. Who was the next to write a part of the Bible? Exodus 24:4a

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2. What did he do with the part that he had written? Exodus 24:7a, b

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3. Where was this part of the Bible kept? Deuteronomy 31:24-26

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4. Who wrote the next part of the Bible? Joshua 24:26a

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5. Where did he write it? Joshua 24:26a

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6. Who was the next writer? I Samuel 10:25a

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7. What did he write about? I Samuel 10:25a

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8. Where did he put his writing? I Samuel 10:25b, c

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9. What was another part of the Bible that was written? Proverbs 25:1a

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10. Who wrote this part down? Proverbs 25:1b

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11. Who composed still another part of the Bible? Jeremiah 36:1, 2, 4

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12. Who actually wrote this part down? Jeremiah 36:4b

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2 Bible Discoveries: Literature of the OT Series by Sarah Overstreet Midyett  
*Book 1 Before the Nation Began through Era of the Judges*

**C. The Old Testament Completed:**

1. Soon after each Old Testament book was written under the inspiration of God, it was recognized by the Jewish people to be God's Word. Why would their opinion in this matter be of great value? Romans 3:2b, Romans 9:4a, d, e, g
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2. Tradition has it that Ezra, the priest and scribe of post-captivity days, collected the Old Testament books and completed the Old Testament *Canon*, or list of inspired books. Possibly he was assisted by others, including Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who lived at about the same time. See Nehemiah 8-10 for what is certainly known of Ezra's work.
3. The Hebrew Old Testament contained exactly the same material that is in the Protestant Old Testament today. However, the books were in a different order, and some books were combined, so that there were only 24 books, arranged in a threefold division:
  - I. The Law (5 books):  
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
  - II. The Prophets (8 books):  
Former Prophets (4 books): Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.  
Latter Prophets (4 books):  
Major (3 books): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.  
Minor (1 book): The Twelve.
  - III. The Writings (11 books):  
Poetical (3 books): Psalms, Proverbs, Job.  
The Five Rolls (5 books): Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther.  
Three Books (historical): Daniel, Extra-Nehemiah, Chronicles.

**Note:** The Apocrypha, 14 books considered by some to be the Word of God, never had a place in the Hebrew Canon.