

If you want a fairly thorough academic delineation of the Jewish canon at the time of the Incarnation, see Duane L. Christensen, “Josephus and the Twenty-Two-Book Canon of Sacred Scripture.” *JETS* 29/1 (March 1986) 37-46. Among other things you will find early church writers listed who endorsed this listing and canon. He lists, Origen (c. 250), Hilary of Poitiers (c. 254), Eusebius (c. 320), Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 250), Athanasius (c. 360), the Council of Laodicea (360-364), Epiphanius (c. 368), Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 370), Jerome (c. 380) and Rufinus (c. 390). He was citing M. Stuart, *Critical History and Defence of the Old Testament Canon* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1872) 255 and A. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1964) 134-155.

The TNK/OT canon was fixed before the Incarnation. Josephus states this in his *Contra Apion*. This is shown by Josephus’s use of the Letter of Aristeas in his *Antiquities* 12.12ff where he writes, “³⁸ For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from, and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two books, {g} which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine;

³⁹ and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years;

⁴⁰ but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books.

The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. (Apion 1:38-40 *JOE*).

As I noted in my chart we have Luke 24.44 where Jesus notes, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you-- that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (Lk. 24:44 CSB17). That is the TNK canon – Torah (Law of Moses), Nev’im (Prophets), and Kethubim (Psalms the first of the four books noted by Josephus). For the historical note, in Matthew 23.35 Jesus makes a historical note that excludes the Maccabees; “So all the righteous blood shed on the earth will be charged to you, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.” (Matt. 23:35 CSB1). The canon of the NT writers was the Jewish canon which is also the protestant canon. We use Jesus’s canon.

The whole discussion of the use of the term “Septuagint” regarding the concept of canon is laid out nicely in Edmon L. Gallagher’s “Suddenly and the Gradually: The Growth of the Septuagint and its Canon” in *JBL* 143, no. 2 (2024): 303-322. If you are near an academic library you should read it.

The Jewish scriptures at the time of Josephus were divided into three distinct sections; the Torah or Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.¹ In the modern translations of the Old Testament, the book of Daniel is numbered with the Prophets. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, the standard Hebrew Bible in use in schools puts Daniel in the section of the Writings. This dichotomy will be dealt with later.

The books of the prophets contain much detail concerning the history of the Jewish people. Josephus, in his *Contra Apion* (1.37-43), lists twenty-two books; five of Moses, thirteen of the prophets, and “the remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of

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human life.”² The prophets extend historically from the time immediately following the Exodus (anywhere between 1500-1200 B.C.E.) to just after the return from the Babylonian exile. Josephus spends much of his time in this period of Israel's history and it is curious that he devotes as much time as he does to the book of Daniel, moreso than any other of the major prophets.³

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1. Thackeray's note (p. 179, n. b) list the prophets as probably Joshua, Judges and Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations, Ezekiel, Minor Prophets, Daniel. The “four” he lists as Psalms, Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Sid Z. Leiman is in agreement with this numbering in his “Josephus and the Canon of the Bible” in Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 53–54. This differs with the arrangement found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* which, though containing the same books and recognizing the same tri-partite division (Law, Prophets, Writings), places Job, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles among the writings. *Baba Bathra* 14b (Babylonian Talmud, ~200–500 C.E.) is the source of this arrangement.

1. Concerning the major writing prophets, Josephus mentions Isaiah eight times; Jeremiah nine times; Ezekiel five times. In the former, non-writing prophets, the prophet Elijah is referred to seven times, and Elisha is mentioned six times. Daniel, however, has a major portion of an entire chapter devoted to his work and prophecies. Feldman notes on page 630 that among the biblical figures that Josephus gives his attention, he focuses a proportionately large amount of space to Daniel. He notes that “the ratio of Josephus to the Hebrew text for Joseph is 1.63 (1.20 with respect to the Septuagint; 5.45 [3.75 with reference to the Septuagint] for the episode of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife; 3.26 [2.38 with reference to the Septuagint] for the narrative dealing with Joseph’s dreams and subsequent enslavement; 4.09 [2.97 with reference to the Septuagint] for the pericope comprising the final test of Joseph’s brothers), the ratio for Daniel (*Ant.* 10.186-218: 537 lines in the Loeb Classical Library; 407 lines in the Hebrew Aramaic text of Daniel, chapters 1-6 and 8; 790 lines in the Septuagint text of Rahlfs) is 1.32 with respect to the Hebrew and .68 with respect to the Greek.”

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