

# The Bible and History

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Over a long journey of nearly twenty centuries, the church has always been able to count on the presence of the Bible. From the moment of its birth on the day of Pentecost, the church already had the Hebrew Scriptures in hand—what we now call the Old Testament—and used them to interpret what was happening. Thus, Peter, in Acts 2, uses the words of the prophet Joel to explain what was going on in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A short time later, as it expanded to other cultures and generations, the church could rely on the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles to teach believers the stories of Jesus and the meaning of faith. Thus, for example, in the mid-second century, Justin Martyr tells of Christians gathered together the first day of the week to break bread and read the “memoirs of the apostles,” that is, the Gospels. Along about the same time, besieged by all sorts of doctrines that twisted the gospel of Jesus Christ, the church began establishing the New Testament canon.

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