

## Lectionary Statistics

How much of the Bible is included in the *Lectionary for Mass*?  
Not as much as you might think, yet far more than was included in the *Roman Missal* before the  
Second Vatican Council!

The bishops assembled at Vatican II declared, "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way the more significant part of the Sacred Scriptures will be read to the people over a fixed number of years" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #51). As the following tables show, the current *Lectionary for Mass* does indeed offer a "richer fare" of biblical readings during the Eucharistic liturgy than was available before Vatican II. However, since many parts of the Bible (esp. the Old Testament) are still not included in the Lectionary, one must go beyond the readings used at Mass to cover the entire Bible.

The following tables compare the current edition of the [Lectionary for Mass](#) (1981 Latin, 1998/2002 USA editions)  
with the pre-Vatican II [Missale Romanum](#) (substantially unchanged between 1570 and 1969, with a few modifications in 1951)  
and the complete [New American Bible](#) (see the bottom of this page for a key to the column headings).

### Readings from the Old Testament:

**Before Vatican II**, each Catholic Mass included only two biblical readings, which were normally referred to as "The Epistle" (since the first reading was almost always taken from one of the New Testament letters) and "The Gospel." Readings from the Old Testament were never used on Sundays, but only at the Easter Vigil, the Vigil of Pentecost, the feast of Epiphany and its octave, during Holy Week, and on some weekdays (esp. Ember days, weekdays of Lent, the feasts of some saints, and some votive Masses).

**Since Vatican II**, Masses on Sundays and major feast days include three biblical readings, the first of which is usually taken from the Old Testament (except during the Easter Season, when the first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles). The OT reading is normally very brief and thematically related to the Gospel reading of the day, so there is no detectable order or semi-continuous pattern from one Sunday to the next. Weekday Masses usually have only two readings, the first of which is taken from either the OT or the NT, according to a [two-year weekday cycle](#).

OT	Name of Book	NAB		Pre-Vatican II Missal: Vigils & Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Weekdays	
		# Chap.	# Vv. Total	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used
1	Genesis	50	1533	100**	6.5 %	138	9.0 %	428	27.9 %
2	Exodus	40	1213	28	2.3 %	112	9.2 %	208	17.1 %

3	Leviticus	27	859	0	0 %	9	1.0 %	42	4.9 %
4	Numbers	36	1289	0	0 %	11	0.9 %	81	6.3 %
5	Deuteronomy	34	959	9	0.9 %	52	5.4 %	106	11.1 %
6	Joshua	24	658	0	0 %	9	1.4 %	42	6.4 %
7	Judges	21	618	0	0 %	0	0 %	51	8.3 %
8	Ruth	4	85	0	0 %	0	0 %	21	24.7 %
9	1 Samuel	31	810	0	0 %	31	3.8 %	148	18.3 %
10	2 Samuel	24	695	0	0 %	19	2.7 %	110	15.8 %
11	1 Kings	22	817	0	0 %	37	4.5 %	166	20.3 %
12	2 Kings	25	719	0	0 %	14	1.9 %	100	13.9 %
13	1 Chronicles	29	943	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %
14	2 Chronicles	36	821	0	0 %	8	1.0 %	17	2.1 %
15	Ezra	10	280	0	0 %	0	0 %	21	7.5 %
16	Nehemiah	13	405	0	0 %	8	2.0 %	19	4.7 %
17	Tobit	14	245	0	0 %	0	0 %	71	29.0 %
18	Judith	16	340	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %
19	Esther	16	272	0	0 %	0	0 %	7	2.6 %
20	1 Maccabees	16	922	0	0 %	0	0 %	54	5.9 %
21	2 Maccabees	15	556	0	0 %	8	1.4 %	35	6.3 %
22*	Job	42	1068	0	0 %	11	1.0 %	87	8.1 %
24*	Proverbs	31	915	0	0 %	24	2.6 %	47	5.1 %
25	Ecclesiastes	12	222	0	0 %	4	1.8 %	34	15.3 %
26	Song of Solomon	8	117	0	0 %	0	0 %	7	6.0 %
27	Wisdom of Solomon	19	436	0	0 %	42	9.6 %	102	23.4 %
28	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus	51	1372	0	0 %	48	3.5 %	208	15.2 %
29	Isaiah	66	1291	24**	1.9 %	166	12.9 %	322	24.9 %
30	Jeremiah	52	1364	0	0 %	38	2.8 %	162	11.9 %
31	Lamentations	5	154	0	0 %	0	0 %	8	5.2 %
32	Baruch	6	213	30**	14.1 %	27	12.7 %	44	20.7 %
33	Ezekiel	48	1273	14**	1.1 %	48	3.8 %	180	14.1 %
34	Daniel	14	530	24**	4.5 %	5	0.9 %	178	33.6 %
35	Hosea	14	197	16	8.1 %	11	5.6 %	38	19.3 %
36	Joel	4	73	0	0 %	5	6.8 %	27	37.0 %
37	Amos	9	146	0	0 %	13	8.9 %	51	34.9 %
38	Obadiah	1	21	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %
39	Jonah	4	48	10**	20.8 %	6	12.5 %	39	81.3 %
40	Micah	7	105	0	0 %	4	3.8 %	24	22.9 %
41	Nahum	3	47	0	0 %	0	0 %	8	17.0 %
42	Habakkuk	3	56	0	0 %	5	8.9 %	12	21.4 %
43	Zephaniah	3	53	0	0 %	8	15.1 %	13	24.5 %
44	Haggai	2	38	0	0 %	0	0 %	18	47.4 %
45	Zechariah	14	211	0	0 %	5	2.4 %	24	11.4 %
46	Malachi	3	55	0	0 %	6	10.9 %	18	32.7 %

\* **Note 1:** The above table does not include the Psalms, since they are used so often in various ways during the Mass.

\*\* **Note 2:** The 1951 revision of the *Roman Missal* reduced the number of OT readings at the Easter Vigil from twelve to four,

and omitted all six OT readings from the Pentecost Vigil, thereby further reducing the total amount of the OT read before Vatican II;  
 remaining were only 33 verses of Genesis, 28 of Exodus, 9 of Deuteronomy, 12 of Isaiah and 16 of Hosea. For details, see the [Roman Missal](#) page.

### OT Summary:

OT Section	NAB		Pre-Vatican II Missal: Vigils & Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Weekdays	
	# Chap.	# Vv. Total	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used
Torah/Law	187	5853	137	2.3 %	322	5.5 %	865	14.8 %
Historical Books	316	9186	0	0 %	134	1.5 %	862	9.4 %
Wisdom Books (w/o Psalms)	163	4130	0	0 %	129	3.1 %	485	11.7 %
Four Major Prophets	191	4825	92	1.9 %	284	5.9 %	894	18.5 %
Twelve Minor Prophets	67	1050	26	2.5 %	63	6.0 %	272	25.9 %
<b>OT Total (w/o Psalms)</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>25044</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>1.0 %</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>3.7 %</b>	<b>3378</b>	<b>13.5 %</b>

**Note 3:** The 1951 revision of the pre-Vatican II *Roman Missal* (see note 2 above) reduced the total to only 98 verses or 0.39% of the Old Testament (aside from the Psalms) read at Vigils and major feast days.

### Readings from the New Testament:

**Before Vatican II**, the same readings were used each year for the various Masses in the [Roman Missal](#). The first reading was usually from one of Paul's Letters or the Catholic Epistles. The Gospel readings were most often taken from Matthew or John, less frequently from Luke, and only rarely from Mark.

**Since Vatican II**, much more of the New Testament is included in the *Lectionary for Mass*. The [Acts of the Apostles](#) is used as the first reading on the Sundays and weekdays during the Easter season. The Gospels of [Matthew](#), [Mark](#), and [Luke](#) are read semi-continuously on the Sundays of Ordinary Time on a three-year cycle, while passages from the Gospel of [John](#) are used mostly during the seasons of Lent and Easter and on several major feast days. Excerpts from all other NT books and letters are used as the second reading at Masses on Sundays and major feasts according to a [three-year cycle](#), and/or weekday Masses on a [two-year cycle](#). (Click on any of the previous underlined links for more details.)

NT	Name of Book	NAB		Pre-Vatican II Missal: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Weekdays	
		# Chap.	# Vv. Total	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used
1	Matthew	28	1071	373	34.8 %	594	55.5 %	916	85.5 %
2	Mark	16	678	30	3.4 %	414	61.1 %	653	96.3 %
3	Luke	24	1151	188	16.3 %	650	56.5 %	1011	87.8 %
4	John	21	879	256	30.0 %	526	59.8 %	813	92.5 %
5	Acts	28	1007	35	3.5 %	165	16.4 %	492	48.9 %
6	Romans	16	433	69	15.9 %	117	27.0 %	228	52.7 %
7	1 Corinthians	16	437	75	17.2 %	162	37.1 %	244	55.8 %
8	2 Corinthians	13	256	40	15.6 %	48	18.8 %	123	48.0 %

9	Galatians	6	149	45	30.2 %	47	31.5 %	90	60.4 %
10	Ephesians	6	155	57	36.8 %	96	61.9 %	141	91.0 %
11	Philippians	4	104	25	24.0 %	47	45.2 %	73	70.2 %
12	Colossians	4	95	16	16.8 %	35	36.8 %	62	65.3 %
13	1 Thessalonians	5	89	16	18.0 %	39	43.8 %	69	77.5 %
14	2 Thessalonians	3	47	0	0.0 %	17	36.2 %	28	59.6 %
15	1 Timothy	6	113	0	0.0 %	20	17.7 %	51	45.1 %
16	2 Timothy	4	83	0	0.0 %	25	30.1 %	39	47.0 %
17	Titus	3	46	9	19.6 %	8	17.4 %	28	60.9 %
18	Philemon	1	25	0	0.0 %	8	32.0 %	19	76.0 %
19	Hebrews	13	303	17	5.6 %	84	27.7 %	188	62.0 %
20	James	5	108	11	10.2 %	31	28.7 %	99	91.7 %
21	1 Peter	5	105	33	31.4 %	36	34.3 %	57	54.3 %
22	2 Peter	3	61	0	0.0 %	7	11.5 %	15	24.6 %
23	1 John	5	105	13	12.4 %	33	31.4 %	95	100.0 %
24	2 John	1	13	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	6	46.2 %
25	3 John	1	15	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	4	26.7 %
26	Jude	1	25	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	6	24.0 %
27	Revelation	22	404	0	0.0 %	38	9.4 %	129	31.9 %

### NT Summary:

NT Section	NAB		Pre-Vatican II Missal: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Major Feasts		Current Lectionary: Sundays & Weekdays	
	# Chap.	# Vv. Total	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used	Vv. Used	% Used
Gospels (4)	89	3779	848	22.4 %	2184	57.8 %	3393	89.8 %
Acts	28	1007	35	3.5 %	165	16.4 %	492	48.9 %
Pauline Letters (7)	61	1493	270	18.1 %	468	31.3 %	846	56.7 %
Deutero-Paulines (6)	26	539	82	15.2 %	201	37.3 %	349	64.7 %
Hebrews	13	303	17	5.6 %	84	27.6 %	188	62.0 %
Catholic Epistles (7)	21	432	57	13.2 %	107	24.7 %	292	67.6 %
Book of Revelation	22	404	0	0 %	38	9.4 %	129	31.9 %
<b>NT w/o Gospels</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>4178</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>11.0 %</b>	<b>1063</b>	<b>25.4 %</b>	<b>2296</b>	<b>54.9 %</b>
<b>NT Grand Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>7957</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>16.5 %</b>	<b>3247</b>	<b>40.8 %</b>	<b>5689</b>	<b>71.5 %</b>

### Key to the Column Headings:

- **NAB** = *New American Bible*, used as the basis for chapter and verse numbers in the USA editions of the current *Lectionary for Mass*
  - **# Chap.** = total number of chapters in each biblical book (or section of the Bible), in the *New American Bible* translation
  - **# Vv. Total** = total number of verses in each biblical book (or section of the Bible), in the *New American Bible* translation
- **Pre-Vatican II Missal** = the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Pius V, nearly identical from 1570 to 1969, with a few changes introduced in 1951.

- **Vigils & Major Feasts** = In the pre-Vatican II Missal, OT readings were only used at the Easter Vigil, Pentecost Vigil, Epiphany & its octave, and during Holy Week, but never on any Sundays.
- **Current Lectionary** = the *Ordo Lectionum Missae* (2nd Latin edition, 1981), equivalent to the *Lectionary for Mass* (2nd USA edition, 1998/2002)
  - **Sundays & Major Feasts** = readings contained in the first half of the *Missale Romanum*, or Vol. 1 of the current *Lectionary for Mass*, including all Sundays and Solemnities of the Lord, and a few other major Feasts (those which can replace an ordinary Sunday Mass).
  - **Sundays & Weekdays** = readings prescribed for all Sundays and weekdays during the various liturgical seasons (but *not* including the Propers or Commons of the Saints, Votive Masses, Ritual Masses, or Masses for Various Needs and Occasions).
- **Vv. Used** = number of verses from each biblical book or section used in the *Roman Missal* or the *Lectionary for Mass*, respectively.
- **% Used** = percentage of verses from each biblical book or section used in the *Roman Missal* or the *Lectionary for Mass*, respectively.

<a href="#">Main Lectionary Page</a>	<a href="#">1998/2002 USA Edition</a>	<a href="#">1992 Canadian Edition</a>
<a href="#">Links to Other Websites</a>	<a href="#">1970 USA Edition</a>	<a href="#">Roman Missal (Pre-Vatican II)</a>

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