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Question 79 - What are the facts regarding the Gutenberg Bible?

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101 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

79. What are the facts regarding the Gutenberg Bible?

There are 48 surviving copies of Gutenberg's 42-line Bible, so-called because most of its pages are composed of 42 lines of text arranged in a double column. Eleven of the surviving copies are printed on vellum and 37 are on paper. The text is the revised Vulgate translation produced in the early 13th century at the University of Paris and considered the best version at the time. It also included Jerome's prologue to the translation. The Bible was printed in the folio format used for Bibles for public readings; each set of four book pages was created from a single large sheet folded over once. It was usually bound in two volumes.

The Gutenberg Bible has no title page, page numbers, or any other feature to distinguish it from a manuscript edition. Gutenberg affected a hand-copied look in other ways as well. For example, he made multiple casts of certain letters – eight variations of the lower-case letter *a* alone – in the effort to imitate the quirks of script and disguise the machine-made origins of his lettering.

(The Bible Through the Ages. Reader's Digest. Pleasantville, N.Y. 1989. p. 296)