

Appendix A

Book outlines

This appendix gives a brief summary and outline of every book of the Bible. The books are given in the same order they appear in the Bible. The following table gives page numbers.

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Genesis

Author: Moses

Time: Creation to 1580 B.C.

Summary: Genesis means “the beginning” and it is a book of beginnings. It records the creation of the world and the beginning of the nation of Israel. Chapters 12–50 focus on one man, Abraham, and his descendants. Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob are called the patriarchs of Israel. Jacob’s twelve sons are the beginnings of the twelve tribes of Israel. Through Joseph, one of Jacob’s sons, the whole family settles in Egypt.

Key verses: “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (1:31)

“The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you . . . and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’ ” (12:1–3)

Main people: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Primeval History | 1:1–11:26 |
| a) Creation | 1:1–2:3 |
| b) Adam and Eve in Eden | 2:4–25 |
| c) The first sin and its consequences | 3:1–24 |
| d) Cain and Abel | 4:1–16 |
| e) Two genealogies | 4:17–5:32 |
| f) The great flood | 6:1–9:29 |
| g) The spread of nations | 10:1–11:26 |
| 2. Patriarchal History | 11:27–50:26 |
| a) The life of Abraham | 11:27–25:11 |
| b) The descendants of Ishmael | 25:12–18 |
| c) The life of Jacob | 25:19–35:29 |
| d) The descendants of Esau | 36:1–37:1 |
| e) The life of Joseph | 37:2–50:26 |

Exodus

Author: Moses

Time: 1446 B.C.

Summary: The title “Exodus” means “going out”. It records the great numerical growth of the Israelites during their enslavement and oppression in Egypt. Moses emerges to lead God’s people from slavery to the promised land of Canaan. At Mt Sinai, God gave Moses the laws which were to form the basis for the covenant between God and the new nation of Israel. They are summarised in the ten commandments. The book concludes with a description of the worship centred around the Tabernacle and the Law of Moses.

Key verse: “I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (3:8)

Main people: Pharaoh, Moses and his brother Aaron.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. The liberation of Israel | 1:1–18:27 |
| a) Introduction | 1:1–7 |
| b) Bondage in Egypt | 1:8–22 |
| c) Preparation of the deliverer | 2:1–4:31 |
| d) The mission of Moses to Pharaoh | 5:1–7:7 |
| e) The ten plagues in Egypt | 7:8–11:10 |
| f) The Passover and the departure of Israel | 12:1–15:21 |
| g) Journey to Sinai | 15:22–18:27 |
| 2. Israel at Mt Sinai | 19:1–40:38 |
| a) Establishment of the covenant at Sinai | 19:1–24:18 |
| b) Directions for the tabernacle and the priesthood | 25:1–31:18 |
| c) The covenant broken and restored | 32:1–34:35 |
| d) Building of the tabernacle | 35:1–40:38 |

Leviticus

Author: Moses

Time: 1445 B.C.

Summary: The third book of the Pentateuch takes its name from one of the 12 sons of Jacob, Levi, whose family was ordained by God to minister to him as priests. The book covers the laws of the Jewish people regarding worship and religious activities, both personal and national. It contained laws regarding cleanliness, morality, ethics and hygiene. Animal sacrifice was introduced as an atonement for the individual and national sins of the people.

Key verses: “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, you makes you holy.” (20:7–8)

Main people: The people who bring the offerings (people of God) and the people who sacrifice the offerings (priests).

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Laws on Sacrifice | 1:1–7:38 |
| a) The five main offerings | 1:1–6:7 |
| b) Instructions for priests | 6:8–7:38 |
| 2. Institution of priesthood | 8:1–10:20 |
| a) Ordination of Aaron and his sons | 8:1–36 |
| b) Aaron’s first sacrifices | 9:1–24 |
| c) Judgement on Nadab and Abihu | 10:1–20 |
| 3. Uncleaness and its treatment | 11:1–15:33 |
| a) Unclean animals | 11:1–47 |
| b) Uncleaness of childbirth | 12:1–8 |
| c) Unclean diseases and discharges | 13:1–15:33 |
| 4. Festivals and laws of practical holiness | 16:1–27:34 |
| a) The Day of Atonement | 16:1–34 |
| b) Sacrifice and eating blood | 17:1–16 |
| c) Moral laws: sexual behaviour, honesty, stealing, idolatry, etc. | 18:1–20:27 |
| d) Rules for priests | 21:1–22:33 |
| e) Religious festivals | 23:1–44 |
| f) Rules for the tabernacle | 24:1–9 |
| g) Punishment for blasphemy, murder, etc. | 24:10–23 |
| h) Sabbath year, jubilee, land tenure and slavery | 25:1–55 |
| i) Blessings and curses for obedience and disobedience | 26:1–46 |
| j) Regulations for offerings vowed to the Lord | 27:1–34 |

Numbers

Author: Moses

Time: 1445–1407 B.C.

Summary: Numbers is the fourth book of the Pentateuch. It is named for the numbering of the people of Israel. However, it was known to the Jewish people as “In the Wilderness”, because it primarily tells of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness before entering the promised land. After the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites rebelled against God. Because of this rebellion, only two men of all the adults who left Egypt were to enter into the promised land of Canaan.

Key verse: “Whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped.” (9:17)

Main people: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, Miriam and the priests.

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. At Sinai | 1:1–10:10 |
| a) Census of the people | 1:1–4:49 |
| b) Purity of the people | 5:1–10:10 |
| 2. From Sinai to Kadesh | 10:11–19:22 |
| a) Journeying at God’s command | 10:11–36 |
| b) Murmuring and discontent | 11:1–12:16 |
| c) Exploring Canaan and a lack of faith | 13:1–14:45 |
| d) Instructions for the next generation | 15:1–41 |
| e) Revolt against God’s appointments | 16:1–17:13 |
| f) Rules for priests | 18:1–19:22 |
| g) The sin of Moses | 20:1–13 |
| 3. From Kadesh to Moab | 20:14–32:42 |
| a) Journey from Kadesh to Moab | 20:14–22:1 |
| b) Balaam’s curse turned into a blessing | 22:2–24:25 |
| c) Israel goes astray | 25:1–18 |
| d) The second census | 26:1–65 |
| e) Instructions for the new generation | 27:1–30:16 |
| f) War against Midian | 31:1–54 |
| g) Settlement of 2½ tribes on east of Jordan | 32:1–43 |
| 4. Appendixes | 33:1–36:13 |
| a) The stages of the journey | 33:1–56 |
| b) Towns for Levites and cities of refuge | 34:1–35:34 |
| c) The inheritance for women | 36:1–13 |

Deuteronomy

Author: Moses

Time: 1407 B.C.

Summary: This book is the last of the Pentateuch. Its Greek name means “second law” because the book contains a repetition of the law recorded in Leviticus. The book consists of several speeches by Moses, his last major addresses to the nation prior to his death. The speeches were given on the plains of Moab just prior to the entrance into the promised land of Canaan by the nation of Israel under the command of Joshua. At this time only two men were left of the generation which escaped from Egypt. Therefore, the repetition of the law was extremely important to the welfare of the new generation.

Key verse: “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” (30:19)

Main people: Moses, Joshua

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Israel’s faithlessness and God’s care | 1:1–4:4 |
| 2. Stipulations of the covenant | 4:44–26:19 |
| a) Review of the covenant | 4:44–11:32 |
| b) Supplementary requirements | 12:1–26:19 |
| 3. Curses and blessings | 27:1–30:20 |
| 4. Change of leadership | 31:1–34:12 |
| a) Joshua to succeed Moses | 31:1–29 |
| b) Song of Moses | 31:30–32:47 |
| c) Moses’ blessings on tribes | 32:48–33:29 |
| d) Death of Moses and succession of Joshua | 34:1–12 |

Joshua

Author: Joshua

Time: 1406–1400 B.C.

Summary: Joshua was selected by God to succeed Moses and lead the nation into the Promised land. The book outlines the conquest and occupation by Israel under his military leadership. God explicitly states that all the inhabitants of the land were to be utterly destroyed in order to assure spiritual purity and complete devotion to God.

Key verse: “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” (24:15)

Main people: Joshua, Rahab.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Entrance into the promised land | 1:1–5:12 |
| a) Exhortations to conquer | 1:1–18 |
| b) Reconnaissance of Jericho | 2:1–24 |
| c) Crossing the Jordan | 3:1–51 |
| d) Consecration at Gilgal | 5:2–12 |
| 2. Conquest of the promised land | 5:13–12:24 |
| a) Initial battles | 5:13–8:35 |
| b) Southern campaign | 9:1–10:43 |
| c) The northern campaign | 11:1–23 |
| d) Catalogue of the defeated kings | 12:1–24 |
| 3. Distribution of the promised land | 13:1–21:45 |
| a) Areas yet to be conquered | 13:1–7 |
| b) Territory of the tribes east of the Jordan River | 13:8–33 |
| c) Territory for the tribes at Judah and Joseph given at Gilgal | 14:1–17:18 |
| d) Territories of the remaining tribes given at Shiloh | 18:1–19:51 |
| e) Cities for Levites | 20:1–21:45 |
| 4. Tribal unity and loyalty to the Lord | 22:1–24:33 |
| a) Departure of the tribes east of the Jordan River | 22:1–34 |
| b) Joshua’s farewell address to the leaders of Israel | 23:1–16 |
| c) Renewal of the covenant commitment at Shechem | 24:1–28 |
| d) Death of Joshua | 24:29–33 |

Judges

Author: Probably Samuel

Time: 1400–1100 B.C.

Summary: After arriving in Canaan, many Israelites became disobedient to God, partly because of their failure to drive out the inhabitants of the land. The book of Judges shows how God raised up leaders to call them back to faithfulness and to continue the conquest of the land. It covers the period from the death of Joshua to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul. The book of Judges closes by setting the stage for the people’s desire for a human king.

Key verses: “Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies . . . But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers.” (2:18–19)

Main people: The judges including Deborah, Gideon and Samson.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–3:6 |
| a) Israel’s failure to purge the land | 1:1–2:5 |
| b) God’s dealings with Israel’s rebellion | 2:6–3:6 |
| 2. Oppression and deliverance | 3:7–16:31 |
| a) Othniel | 3:7–11 |
| b) Ehud | 3:12–30 |
| c) Shamgar | 3:31 |
| d) Deborah | 4:1–5:31 |
| e) Gideon | 6:1–8:35 |
| f) Abimelech | 9:1–57 |
| g) Tola | 10:1–2 |
| h) Jair | 10:3–5 |
| i) Jephthah | 10:6–12:7 |
| j) Ibzan | 12:8–10 |
| k) Elon | 12:11–12 |
| l) Abdon | 12:13–15 |
| m) Samson | 13:1–16:31 |
| 3. Religious and moral disorder | 17:1–21:25 |
| a) Corruption of doctrine | 17:1–18:31 |
| b) Corruption of practice | 19:1–21:25 |

Ruth

Author: Unknown

Time: 1250 B.C.

Summary: The book of Ruth is set in the period of the Judges. It shows that in a time of national decline and immorality, God preserved a remnant who could serve as the core for a future revival. This would be accomplished in Ruth's descendant, David, from whom the Messiah would come. It is thought that the book is written after the period of the Judges and describes customs of that time period.

Key verse: "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." (1:16)

Main people: Ruth, Naomi, Boaz

1. Naomi's family dies 1:1–5
2. Naomi returns from Moab 1:6–22
3. Ruth and Boaz meet in the harvest fields 2:1–23
4. Ruth goes to Boaz at the threshing floor 3:1–18
5. Boaz arranges to marry Ruth 4:1–12
6. Naomi blessed with a new family 4:13–22

1 and 2 Samuel

Author: Possibly Samuel, Nathan and Gad

Time: 1100–970 B.C.

Summary: Samuel is the first of two historical books which illustrates Israel’s transition from a loose confederation of tribes to a strong and united nation. It portrays the life of the last judge, Samuel, and the anointing of the first king of Israel, Saul. It recounts the degenerating reign of Saul and the succession to his throne of David, a man after God’s own heart. In the original Hebrew text, the books of Samuel were considered one book by the Hebrew scribes. The second book begins with the death of Saul and the ascension of David to the throne. The rest of the book records the reign of David regarding conquered lands, as well as political intrigues. It concludes with the blessing of Solomon by David.

Key verses: “We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.” (1 Samuel 8:19–20)

“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” (2 Samuel 7:12–13)

Main people: Eli, Samuel, Saul, David, Abner, Mephibosheth, Uriah, Bathsheba, Nathan, Joab, Amnon, Absalom

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. The life of Samuel | 1 Sam 1:1–7:17 |
| a) The birth and childhood of Samuel | 1:1–4:1a |
| b) The capture and return of the ark | 4:1b–7:17 |
| 2. The life of Saul | 8:1–15:35 |
| a) Israel’s request for a king | 8:1–22 |
| b) Political life of Saul | 9:1–12:25 |
| c) War of Independence | 13:1–14:52 |
| d) Saul rejected by God | 15:1–35 |
| 3. The early life of David | 16:1–2 Sam 20:26 |
| a) David anointed to be king | 16:1–13 |
| b) David in the court of Saul | 16:14–19:17 |
| c) David in exile | 19:18–31:13 |
| d) David, king at Hebron | 2 Sam 1:1–4:12 |
| e) David, king at Jerusalem | 5:1–5 |

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 4. David as king: accomplishment and glory | 5:6–9:13 |
| a) David conquers Jerusalem and defeats the Philistines | 5:6–25 |
| b) David brings ark to Jerusalem | 6:1–23 |
| c) God promises David an everlasting dynasty | 7:1–29 |
| d) David’s victories and officials | 8:1–18 |
| e) David and Mephibosheth | 9:1–13 |
| 5. David as king: weakness and failure | 10:1–20:26 |
| a) David commits adultery and murder | 10:1–12:31 |
| b) David loses his sons Amnon and Absalom | 13:1–20:26 |
| 6. The last days of David | 21:1–24:25 |
| a) The famine | 21:1–14 |
| b) Heroic exploits | 21:15–22 |
| c) David’s psalm | 22:1–51 |
| d) Last words of David | 23:1–7 |
| e) Heroic exploits | 23:8–39 |
| f) Census and plague | 24:1–25 |

1 and 2 Kings

Author: Unknown

Time: 970–586 B.C.

Summary: In the original Hebrew texts, these books were regarded as one book. The two books contain the history of the Jewish monarchy from the death of David (around 970 B.C.) to the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.) They trace the division of the Jewish nation into the Kingdom of Judah in the south and the Kingdom of Israel in the north. 1 & 2 Kings record Israel’s history from a religious, rather than a civil, viewpoint. As such, it records the religious progress of the nation and sets forth the various steps in the moral growth and decay of the kingdom. 1 Kings opens with Israel in its glory, and 2 Kings closes with Israel and Judah in ruins. The purpose of the Book of Kings is to record the lives and characters of the nation’s leaders as a warning and exhortation to all subsequent generations of believers.

Key verses: “Be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements . . . so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go” (1 Kings 2:2–3).

“The LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.” (2 Kings 17:20)

Main people: David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Nathan, Jeroboam, Ahab, Jezebel, Elijah, Elisha, Jehu, Jeroboam II, Joash, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Manasseh, Josiah.

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. United kingdom of Solomon | 1 Kings 1:1–12:24 |
| a) Solomon’s ascension to the throne | 1:1–2:46 |
| b) The wisdom and wealth of Solomon | 3:1–4:34 |
| c) Solomon’s building activity | 5:1–9:9 |
| d) The Golden Age of Solomon | 9:10–10:29 |
| e) Solomon’s apostasy, decline and death | 11:1–43 |
| f) Rehoboam’s succession to the throne | 12:1–24 |
| 2. Divided kingdom from Jeroboam/Rehoboam to Ahab/Asa | 12:1–16:34 |
| a) Jeroboam I of Israel | 12:15–14:20 |
| b) Rehoboam of Judah | 14:21–31 |
| c) Abijah of Judah | 15:1–8 |
| d) Asa of Judah | 15:9–24 |
| e) Nadab of Israel | 15:25–32 |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| f) Baasha of Israel | 15:33–16:7 |
| g) Elah of Israel | 16:8–14 |
| h) Zimri of Israel | 16:15–20 |
| i) Omri of Israel | 16:21–28 |
| j) Ahab of Israel | 16:29–34 |
| 3. Elijah and Elisha from Ahab/Asa to Joram/Jehoshaphat ... | 17:1–2Ki 8:15 |
| a) Elijah in the reign of Ahab | 17:1–22:40 |
| b) Jehoshaphat of Judah | 22:41–50 |
| c) Ahaziah of Israel; Elijah’s last prophecy | 22:51–2Ki 1:18 |
| d) Elijah’s translation; Elisha’s inauguration | 2Ki 2:1–18 |
| e) Elisha in the reign of Joram | 2:19–8:15 |
| 4. Divided kingdom from Joram/Jehoram to exile of Israel | 8:16–17:41 |
| a) Jehoram of Judah | 8:16–24 |
| b) Ahaziah of Judah | 8:25–29 |
| c) Jehu’s revolt and reign | 9:1–10:36 |
| d) Athaliah and Joash of Judah; repair of temple | 11:1–12:21 |
| e) Jehoahaz of Israel | 13:1–9 |
| f) Jehoash of Israel; Elisha’s last prophecy | 13:10–25 |
| g) Amaziah of Judah | 14:1–22 |
| h) Jeroboam II of Israel | 14:23–29 |
| i) Azariah of Judah | 15:1–7 |
| j) Zechariah of Israel | 15:8–12 |
| k) Shallum of Israel | 15:13–16 |
| l) Menahem of Israel | 15:17–22 |
| m) Pekahiah of Israel | 15:23–26 |
| n) Pekah of Israel | 15:27–31 |
| o) Jotham of Judah | 15:32–38 |
| p) Ahaz of Judah | 16:1–20 |
| q) Hoshea of Israel | 17:1–6 |
| r) Exile of Israel; resettlement of land | 17:7–41 |
| 5. Judah from Hezekiah to Babylonian exile | 18:1–25:30 |
| a) Hezekiah | 18:1–20:21 |
| b) Manasseh | 21:1–18 |
| c) Amon | 21:19–26 |
| d) Josiah | 22:1–23:30 |
| e) Jehoahaz exiled to Egypt | 23:31–35 |
| f) Jehoiakim: first Babylonian invasion | 23:36–24:7 |
| g) Jehoiachin: second Babylonian invasion | 24:8–17 |
| h) Zedekiah | 24:18–20 |
| i) Babylonian exile of Judah | 25:1–26 |
| j) Jehoiachin in Babylon | 25:27–30 |

1 and 2 Chronicles

Author: Probably Ezra

Time: 1050–536 B.C.

Summary: Like the Book of Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles were originally one book according to Jewish tradition. However, the Chronicles are not simply a repeat of the history already recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings. The Book of Chronicles was written to remind the nation of their entire history, and of their position among other nations, emphasising the history of priestly worship from the death of Saul to the end of the Babylonian captivity. The Chronicles contain more of the relationship of kings to the worship of God, than does the Book of Kings. The history of the Northern Kingdom is omitted from the Chronicles because the Northern Kingdom had no bearing on the development of true worship of God in Jerusalem.

Key verses: “David . . . said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you’ ” (1 Chron 28:20)

“But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!” (2 Chron 6:18)

Main people: Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Saul, David, Solomon, rulers of Judah

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Genealogies | 1:1–9:44 |
| a) Patriarchs | 1:1–54 |
| b) Judah | 2:1–4:23 |
| c) Simeon | 4:24–43 |
| d) Tribes east of the Jordan River | 5:1–26 |
| e) Levi | 6:1–81 |
| f) Six other tribes | 7:1–9:44 |
| 2. The reign of David | 10:1–29:30 |
| a) The death of Saul | 10:1–14 |
| b) David’s rise | 11:1–20:8 |
| c) David’s latter days | 21:1–29:30 |
| 3. The reign of Solomon | 2 Chron 1:1–9:31 |
| a) Solomon’s inauguration | 1:1–17 |
| b) Solomon’s Temple | 2:1–7:22 |
| c) Solomon’s Kingdom | 8:1–9:31 |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 4. The kingdom of Judah | 10:1–36:23 |
| a) The division of the kingdom | 10:1–11:23 |
| b) Rehoboam | 12:1–16 |
| c) Abijah | 13:1–22 |
| d) Asa | 14:1–16:14 |
| e) Jehoshaphat | 17:1–20:37 |
| f) Jehoram and Ahaziah | 21:1–22:9 |
| g) Joash | 22:10–24:27 |
| h) Amaziah | 25:1–28 |
| i) Uzziah | 26:1–23 |
| j) Jotham | 27:1–9 |
| k) Ahaz | 28:1–27 |
| l) Hezekiah | 29:1–32:33 |
| m) Manasseh | 33:1–20 |
| n) Amon | 33:21–25 |
| o) Josiah | 34:1–36:1 |
| p) Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah | 36:2–14 |
| q) Exile | 36:15–23 |

Ezra

Author: Ezra

Time: 538–457 B.C.

Summary: Ezra covers the events of the Jews returning from the Babylonian captivity. The decline of Babylon and its eventual overthrow by the Persians brought about this return to Jerusalem. The Jews are numbered and allowed to return to Judah to rebuild the Temple. Samaritan assistance is rejected and their opposition is a contributing factor to the slow progress of the Temple construction. Despite the delays, the Temple is completed and dedicated during this period.

Key verse: “The LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage” (9:8).

Main people: Ezra

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. The exiles return from Babylon | 1:1–2:70 |
| a) The decree of Cyrus | 1:1–4 |
| b) Preparations for the journey | 1:5–11 |
| c) Those who returned | 2:1–70 |
| 2. Temple building begins | 3:1–4:23 |
| a) The altar and the foundation | 3:1–13 |
| b) Opposition to the work | 4:1–23 |
| 3. The building completed | 4:24–6:22 |
| a) Work resumed | 4:24–5:5 |
| b) Tattenai’s letter to Darius | 5:6–17 |
| c) Decrees of Cyrus and Darius | 6:1–12 |
| d) The Temple finished | 6:13–22 |
| 4. Ezra’s journey to Jerusalem | 7:1–8:36 |
| a) Ezra introduced | 7:1–10 |
| b) Letter of Artaxerxes to Ezra | 7:11–28 |
| c) The journey to Jerusalem | 8:1–36 |
| 5. Ezra’s reforms | 9:1–10:44 |
| a) The offence of mixed marriages and Ezra’s prayer | 9:1–15 |
| b) The abandonment of mixed marriages | 10:1–17 |
| c) List of those with foreign wives | 10:18–44 |

Nehemiah

Author: Nehemiah

Time: 445–432 B.C.

Summary: The book begins with Nehemiah returning from Babylon as governor of Judah. He plans and oversees the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem despite discouraging opposition and disunity within the Jewish population. The wall is completed and more exiles are returned and registered as Jewish citizens. Nehemiah’s dedication to God drives him to make several religious reforms including a public reading of the Law and arrangements for worship.

Key verse: “So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.” (4:6)

Main person: Nehemiah

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Nehemiah’s arrival in Jerusalem | 1:1–2:20 |
| a) Tragic news from Jerusalem, and Nehemiah’s prayer | 1:1–11 |
| b) The granting of Nehemiah’s request | 2:1–8 |
| c) Nehemiah’s survey of the walls, and his report | 2:9–20 |
| 2. The building of the wall | 3:1–7:4 |
| a) The workmen and their tasks | 3:1–32 |
| b) The opposition of enemies | 4:1–23 |
| c) Reforms of Nehemiah as governor | 5:1–19 |
| d) The wall finished despite opposition | 6:1–7:3 |
| 3. List of exiles | 7:4–7:3a |
| 4. Ezra’s preaching and reforms | 7:73b–10:39 |
| a) The reading and observance of God’s Law | 7:73b–8:18 |
| b) A public confession and covenant | 9:1–10:39 |
| 5. Lists of inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem | 11:1–12:26 |
| a) New residents of Jerusalem | 11:1–24 |
| b) New residents of Judah | 11:25–36 |
| c) List of priests and Levites | 12:1–26 |
| 6. Dedication of walls and organisation of temple services | 12:27–47 |
| 7. Nehemiah’s second administration | 13:1–31 |
| a) Abuses during his absence | 13:1–5 |
| b) Nehemiah’s return to Jerusalem | 13:6–9 |
| c) Reorganisation and reforms | 13:10–31 |

Esther

Author: Not known

Time: about 460 B.C.

Summary: Esther is regarded as a historical book, written during the period of the captivity. It records the plot of Haman, the Prime Minister to the Persian king, to exterminate the Jewish race. This plot is foiled by Esther, the Queen of Persia, who was a Jew. This book gives us the origin of the Feast of Purim.

Key verse: “If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (4:14).

Main people: Vashti, Esther, Mordecai, Haman, Ahasuerus (Xerxes)

1. Vashti divorced 1:1–22
2. Esther made queen 2:1–18
3. Mordecai uncovers a conspiracy 2:19–23
4. Haman’s plot against the Jews 3:1–15
5. Mordecai persuades Esther to help 4:1–17
6. Esther’s first banquet 5:1–8
7. Haman’s rage against Mordecai 5:9–14
8. Haman humiliated before Mordecai 6:1–14
9. Esther’s second banquet, Haman hanged 7:1–10
10. Mordecai’s counter-decree 8:1–17
11. The Jews victorious and the institution of Purim 9:1–32
12. Mordecai promoted 10:1–3

Job

Author: Possibly Moses

Time: Apparently around 1500 B.C.

Summary: Job is the first poetic book of the Old Testament. It relates the anguish of a righteous man as he and his friends struggle to explain the affliction which has befallen Job and has stripped him of his wealth, his family, and his health. The dialogue continues between Job and his friends as each presents his opinion on the reasons behind such troubles.

The purpose of the book of Job is to grapple with the question of why good people sometimes suffer. God promises that he will bless the faithful. Job agonises over the apparent exceptions. The book concludes that ultimately the reason behind much suffering is known only to God.

Key verses: “As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice . . . as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit.” (27:2–4)

Main people: Job, his family, his friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu)

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Affliction of Job | 1:1–2:13 |
| a) Description of Job | 1:1–5 |
| b) Affliction of Job | 1:6–2:10 |
| c) Arrival of Job’s three friends | 2:11–13 |
| 2. Debates between Job and his three friends | 3:1–31:40 |
| a) First cycle of debate | 3:1–14:22 |
| b) Second cycle of debate | 15:1–21:34 |
| c) Third cycle of debate | 22:1–31:40 |
| 3. The speeches of Elihu | 32:1–37:24 |
| 4. Restoration of Job | 38:1–42:17 |
| a) God’s first challenge to Job | 38:1–40:2 |
| b) Job’s response | 40:3–5 |
| c) God’s second challenge to Job | 40:6–41:34 |
| d) Job’s submission and renewed prosperity | 42:1–17 |

Psalms

Author: David, Asaph (David's choir leader), sons of Korah (a family of musicians) and others.

Time: 1000–700 B.C.

Summary: The Psalms are divided into five books, each according to a specific classification. The Psalms are a form of Hebrew poetry, many of which were accompanied by music. The content of the Psalms includes Messianic prophecy, praise to God and visions of the future Kingdom and its glory. David is named as author of approximately half of the Psalms. A handful of other men are responsible for approximately 15, while the authors of the remaining Psalms are unnamed.

Key verses: “Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.” (100:1–2)

| Book | Main author/collector | Psalms |
|------|-----------------------|---------|
| 1 | David | 1–41 |
| 2 | David, sons of Korah | 42–72 |
| 3 | Asaph | 73–89 |
| 4 | Unknown | 90–100 |
| 5 | David, unknown | 107–150 |

Where to find Psalms of:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Instruction | 1; 19; 39 |
| Praise | 8; 29; 93; 100 |
| Thanks | 30; 65; 103; 107; 116 |
| Repentance | 6; 32; 38; 51; 130 |
| Trust | 3; 27; 31; 46; 56; 62; 86 |
| Distress | 4; 13; 55; 64; 88 |
| Hope | 42; 63; 80; 84; 137 |
| History | 78; 105; 106 |

Proverbs

Author: Solomon and others

Time: 1000–700 B.C.

Summary: Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings from several sources, including King Solomon, laying practical rules for right living based on godly wisdom. The sayings deal with many different problems and situations. Most of the proverbs are very short and easy to remember. The proverbs are not organized in a way which puts all the sayings on one topic together. Instead, almost every verse raises a new and important idea. Proverbs presents the idea that humans are either good or evil, wise or foolish, with God or without him. Both are known by their deeds, their “fruits”, their chosen “ways” in life and their fitting ends.

Key verse: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning, of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (9:10)

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Superiority of the way of wisdom | 1:1–9:18 |
| a) Introduction | 1:1–7 |
| b) Appeals and warnings for the young | 1:8–33 |
| c) Commendation of wisdom | 2:1–4:27 |
| d) Warnings against folly | 5:1–7:27 |
| e) Appeals to youth | 8:1–9:18 |
| 2. Main collection of Solomon’s proverbs | 10:1–22:16 |
| 3. The thirty sayings of the wise | 22:17–24:22 |
| 4. Additional sayings of the wise | 24:23–24 |
| 5. Hezekiah’s collection of Solomon’s proverbs | 25:1–29:27 |
| 6. The words of Agur | 30:1–33 |
| 7. The words of Lemuel | 31:1–9 |
| 8. The ideal wife | 31:10–31 |

Ecclesiastes

Author: Solomon

Time: 960 B.C.

Summary: Ecclesiastes is a philosophical book looking at the futility of life without God. It was written by Solomon from his perspective as a man who had opportunity to experience everything life could offer. He concludes that, without God, life would be meaningless; all his worldly possessions and all the pleasures possible would amount to nothing. The conclusion of the book is that man should fear God and obey his commandments.

Key verse: “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (12:13)

1. The futility of human efforts without God 1:1–11
2. The test of practical experience 1:12–2:26
3. Men’s opportunity limited by time 3:1–22
4. Human futility greatly increased by oppression 4:1–16
5. Futility of insincere worship 5:1–9
6. Futility of riches 5:10–6:2
7. Futility of human desires 6:3–11:6
8. Advice and warning to youth 11:7–12:8
9. Conclusion: reverently trust in and obey God 12:9–14

Song of Solomon

Author: Solomon

Time: about 960 B.C.

Summary: This song is a poem in the form of a conversation about the wonder of sexual love. It depicts the beauty of love between a man (probably Solomon) and a woman (probably Solomon's queen) which develops into a mature undying relationship. Many interpret it as an allegory of God's love for his people or the relationship between Christ and his church. The basic message is the purity and sacredness of love.

It is a kind of love song in which the man and the woman take turns in singing about their love for the other. There is also a chorus sung by a group of their friends. The speeches and events described do not necessarily follow in chronological order.

Key verse: "Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame." (8:6)

Main people: The lover (the man), the beloved (the woman), friends.

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. The beginning of love | 1:1–5:1 |
| a) The wedding day | 1:1–2:7 |
| The beloved in the palace (1:1–8) | |
| At the banquet table (1:9–14) | |
| In the bridal chamber (1:15–2:7) | |
| b) Reflections on a courtship | 2:8–3:5 |
| A springtime visit (2:8–11) | |
| The little foxes (2:15–17) | |
| A dream: on counting the cost (3:1–5) | |
| c) The wedding day (continued) | 3:6–5:1 |
| The wedding procession (3:6–11) | |
| The wedding night (4:1–5:1) | |
| 2. The development of oneness | 5:2–8:14 |
| a) a dream of love refused | 5:2–8:4 |
| the dream (5:2–8) | |
| a change of attitude (5:9–6:3) | |
| the return of the lover (6:4–10) | |
| the beloved in the garden (6:11–13a) | |
| The dance of the Mahanaim (6:13b–8:4) | |
| b) a vacation in the country | 8:5–14 |

Isaiah

Author: Isaiah

Time: 740–690 B.C.

Summary: Isaiah ministered in the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He deals with the coming judgement on Judah due to its idolatry and apostasy. He urges the kings and the people to put their trust in God rather than in alliances with other nations. He comforts his people with the realisation that God loves those who are faithful to him and keep his commandments. He speaks of the future Messiah who would come to redeem the nation and restore the Kingdom.

Key verse: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (9:6)

Main people: Isaiah; the kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah

THE BOOK OF JUDGEMENT chs 1–39

- 1. Rebuke and promise 1:1–6:13**
 - a) Rebellion confronted with judgement and grace 1:1–31
 - b) Punishment for sin as preparation for glory 2:1–4:6
 - c) Judgement and exile in store for the nation 5:1–30
 - d) Isaiah’s unique commission from God 6:1–13
 - 2. Prophecies about Judah 7:1–12:6**
 - a) Ahaz warned not to fear the Arameans and Israelites 7:1–25
 - b) Isaiah’s son and David’s son 8:1–9:7
 - c) Judgement against Israel 9:8–10:4
 - d) Assyrian empire crushed; glorious empire to come 10:5–12:6
 - 3. Judgement against the nations 13:1–23:18**
 - a) Against Babylon and its ruler 13:1–14:27
 - b) Against Philistia 14:28–32
 - c) Against Moab 15:1–16:14
 - d) Against Aram and Israel 17:1–14
 - e) Against Cush 18:1–7
 - f) Against Egypt 19:1–20:6
 - g) Against Babylon 21:1–10
 - h) Against Edom 21:11–12
 - i) Against Arabia 21:13–17
 - j) Against Jerusalem 22:1–25
-

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| k) Against Tyre | 23:1–18 |
| 4. Judgement and promise | 24:1–27:13 |
| a) Universal judgement upon universal sin | 24:1–23 |
| b) God praised as deliverer and comforter of Zion | 25:1–26:21 |
| c) Oppressors to be punished but God’s people preserved | 27:1–13 |
| 5. Six woes upon unbelievers | 28:1–33:24 |
| a) Woe to Ephraim (Samaria) and to Judah | 28:1–29 |
| b) Woe to Jerusalem | 29:1–14 |
| c) Woe to those who rely on foreign alliances | 29:15–24 |
| d) Woe to the obstinate nation | 30:1–33 |
| e) Woe to those who rely on Egypt | 31:1–32:20 |
| f) Woe to Assyria—but blessing for God’s people | 33:1–24 |
| 6. More prophecies of judgement and promise | 34:1–35:10 |
| a) Destruction of the nations | 34:1–17 |
| b) Blessing on the way of holiness | 35:1–10 |
| 7. Historical interlude | 36:1–39:8 |
| a) Jerusalem preserved from Assyrian threat | 36:1–37:38 |
| b) God extends Hezekiah’s life | 38:1–22 |
| c) The Babylonian exile predicted | 39:1–8 |
| THE BOOK OF COMFORT | chs 40–66 |
| 8. The deliverance and restoration of Israel | 40:1–48:22 |
| a) Comfort for God’s people | 40:1–41:29 |
| b) The Lord’s servant | 42:1–25 |
| c) The regathering and renewal of Israel | 43:1–44:5 |
| d) The only God | 44:6–47:15 |
| e) The Lord’s exhortations to his people | 48:1–22 |
| 9. The servant’s ministry and Israel’s restoration | 49:1–57:21 |
| a) The call and mission of the servant | 49:1–7 |
| b) The restoration of Zion | 49:8–26 |
| c) Israel’s sin and the servant’s obedience | 50:1–11 |
| d) Everlasting salvation for Zion | 51:1–52:12 |
| e) The suffering and glory of the Lord’s servant | 52:13–53:12 |
| f) The future glory of Zion | 54:1–17 |
| g) The Lord’s call to salvation | 55:1–56:8 |
| h) The condemnation of the wicked in Israel | 56:9–57:21 |
| 10. Everlasting deliverance and everlasting judgement | 58:1–66:24 |
| a) False and true worship | 58:1–14 |
| b) Zion’s confession and redemption | 59:1–21 |
| c) Zion’s peace, prosperity, restoration and glory | 60:1–63:6 |
| d) Prayer for divine deliverance | 63:7–64:12 |
| e) The Lord’s answer: mercy and judgement | 65:1–66:24 |

Jeremiah

Author: Jeremiah and Baruch

Time: 630–575 B.C.

Summary: Jeremiah warns of the impending attack by Babylon that would destroy Jerusalem and enslave the Jews. He urges Jerusalem to turn from its wicked ways, but there is no response. He further warns of the false prophets who are leading the people astray. He urges the Israelites to submit to the Babylonian authority as the instrument of God’s judgment. They reject his warnings, persecute him, and imprison him. The people are carried away to Babylon, leaving Jeremiah and a few others in Jerusalem. He predicts that the captives will return after 70 years to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

Key verse: “If you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly, overflowing with tears, because the Lord’s flock will be taken captive” (13:17)

Main people: Jeremiah; important kings: Manasseh, Josiah, Zedekiah.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. The prophet’s call | 1 |
| 2. Prophetic oracles against Jerusalem and Judah | 2–35 |
| a) Early discourses | 2–6 |
| b) Temple message | 7–10 |
| c) Covenant and conspiracy | 11–13 |
| d) Messages concerning the drought | 14–15 |
| e) Disaster and comfort | 16:1–17:18 |
| f) Command to keep the Sabbath holy | 17:19–27 |
| g) Lessons from the potter | 18–20 |
| h) Condemnation of kings, prophets and people | 21–24 |
| i) Foretelling the Babylonian exile | 25–29 |
| j) Promises of restoration | 30–33 |
| k) Historical appendix | 34–35 |
| 3. Sufferings and persecutions of Jeremiah | 36–38 |
| a) Burning Jeremiah’s scroll | 36 |
| b) Imprisoning Jeremiah | 37–38 |
| 4. The fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath | 39–45 |
| a) The fall itself | 39 |
| b) Appointment of Gedaliah as governor and his assassination | 40:1–41:15 |
| c) Migration to Egypt | 41:16–43:13 |
| d) Prophecy against those in Egypt | 44 |
| e) Historical appendix: promise to Baruch | 45 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 5. Prophecies against the nations | 46–51 |
| a) Against Egypt | 46:1–28 |
| b) Against Philistia | 47:1–7 |
| c) Against Moab | 48:1–47 |
| d) Against Ammon | 49:1–6 |
| e) Against Edom | 49:7–22 |
| f) Against Damascus | 49:23–27 |
| g) Against Arabia | 49:28–33 |
| h) Against Elam | 49:34–39 |
| i) Against Babylon | 50–51 |
| 6. Historical appendix | 52 |
| a) Judah’s fall and captivity | 52:1–30 |
| b) Jehoiachin’s liberation | 52:31–34 |

Lamentations

Author: Jeremiah

Time: 580 B.C.

Summary: Lamentation means “an expression of suffering”. In this book, Jeremiah expressed his sorrow regarding the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of the nation at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar’s army. The book describes and explains the afflictions brought against the city of Jerusalem as well as surrounding nations who scoffed at Jerusalem’s affliction. He emphasises that this is the result of divine judgement for the sins of the people. The book underlines lessons that Jerusalem should learn from to its afflictions: the vanity of glory, leadership and pride.

The entire book is poetic. Each of its five laments contains 22 verses (except the third which has 66 = 3 times 22) reflecting the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The first four laments are alphabetic acrostics (the verses of which begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet).

Key verse: “How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave” (1:1)

-
1. Jerusalem’s misery and desolation 1:1–22
 2. The Lord’s anger against his people 2:1–22
 3. Judah’s complaint—and basis for consolation 3:1–66
 4. The contrast between Zion’s past and present 4:1–22
 5. Judah’s appeal for God’s forgiveness 5:1–22

Ezekiel

Author: Ezekiel

Time: 593–560 B.C.

Summary: This book records the activity of the prophet Ezekiel who lived in Babylon during the Jewish exile. His message was directed to fellow captives and to Jews still present in Palestine. Both groups refused to listen and remained unwilling to accept the rule of Babylon. Ezekiel expressed his message through a number of enacted parables. He proclaimed good news to the exiles that Israel, after being chastened, would be restored and God’s kingdom would rise. This yet future kingdom will last forever and God’s people will never again be cast out.

Key verses: “O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel . . . I will put my Spirit in you and you will live” (37:12,14).

Main people: Ezekiel

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem | 1:1–24:27 |
| a) Introduction: The call of Ezekiel | 1:1–3:27 |
| b) Symbolic acts showing the siege of Jerusalem | 4:1–5:17 |
| c) Oracles explaining divine judgement | 6:1–7:27 |
| d) Vision of the corrupted temple | 8:1–11:25 |
| e) Symbolic acts showing Jerusalem’s exile | 12:1–28 |
| f) Oracles explaining divine judgement | 13:1–24:27 |
| 2. Oracles against foreign nations | 25:1–32:32 |
| a) Ammon | 25:1–7 |
| b) Moab | 25:8–11 |
| c) Edom | 25:12–14 |
| d) Philistia | 25:15–17 |
| e) Tyre | 26:1–28:19 |
| f) Sidon | 28:20–26 |
| g) Egypt | 29:1–32:32 |
| 3. Prophecies of the restoration of Israel | 33:1–39:29 |
| a) The watchman | 33:1–33 |
| b) The Lord as the good shepherd | 34:1–31 |
| c) Oracles against Edom | 35:1–15 |
| d) Israel to be restored and made fruitful | 36:1–37:28 |
| e) The final battle | 38:1–39:29 |
| 4. Vision of the new temple | 40–48 |
| a) Description of the new Temple | 40:1–43:27 |
| b) Duties and land allotment | 44–48 |

Daniel

Author: Daniel

Time: 605–535 B.C.

Summary: The first half of the book of Daniel tells the story of Daniel, a Jewish captive in Babylon who becomes a senior administrator in the empire. The second half of the book predicts the destiny of two opposing powers: The Kingdom of Men and the Kingdom of God, stressing that “the Most High rules in the Kingdom of Men”. Daniel’s prophecies generally do not deal with Israel, but the nations that control Israel. Daniel contains prophecies that span the time from Daniel’s day until the coming kingdom of God.

Key verse: “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever” (2:44).

Main people: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego; Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar; Persian king Darius.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Prologue: the setting | 1 |
| a) Daniel and his friends taken captive | 1:1–7 |
| b) The young men are faithful | 1:8–16 |
| c) The young men are elevated to high positions | 1:17–21 |
| 2. The destinies of the nations of the world | 2–7 |
| a) Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a large statue | 2 |
| b) Nebuchadnezzar’s gold image | 3 |
| c) Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of an enormous tree | 4 |
| d) Belshazzar’s and Babylon’s downfall | 5 |
| e) Daniel’s deliverance | 6 |
| f) Daniel’s dream of four beasts | 7 |
| 3. The destiny of the nation of Israel | 8–12 |
| a) Daniel’s vision of a ram and a goat | 8 |
| b) Daniel’s prayer and his vision of the 70 “sevens” | 9 |
| c) Daniel’s vision of a man | 10:1–11:1 |
| d) Daniel’s vision of the kings of the south and the north | 11:2–45 |
| e) The end times | 12 |

Hosea

Author: Hosea

Time: 755–710 B.C.

Summary: The book of Hosea describes the patient long-suffering of God towards the rebellious and unfaithful northern kingdom of Israel. However, it is made clear to the Israelites that punishment will engulf anyone who remains wilfully rebellious. God ordered Hosea to marry an adulterous wife, Gomer. This was a symbolic representation of God’s relationship with Israel.

Key verses: “The LORD said to [Hosea], ‘Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD’ ” (1:2)

Main people: Hosea; the kings of Israel from Jeroboam II to Hoshea.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. The unfaithful wife and the faithful husband | 1:1–3:5 |
| a) Hosea’s wife and children | 1:1–2:1 |
| b) Judgement on faithless Israel | 2:2–13 |
| c) The restoration of faithless Israel | 2:14–23 |
| d) Hosea’s redemption of his faithless wife | 3:1–5 |
| 2. The unfaithful nation and the faithful God | 4:1–13:16 |
| a) Israel’s unfaithfulness | 4:1–6:3 |
| b) Israel’s punishment | 6:4–10:15 |
| c) The Lord’s faithful love | 11:1–14:9 |

Joel

- Author:** Joel
- Time:** Unknown. The two most likely dates are about 830 B.C. or about 500 B.C. In either case, its message is not significantly affected by its dating.
- Summary:** The book of Joel begins by describing a devastating swarm of locusts which causes national disaster to the agriculture of Israel. Joel calls the nation of Judah to a day of repentance. The last portion of the book is concerned with events associated with the “Day of the Lord”. The message is that, if Judah repents, God will richly bless them and forgive them.
- Key verses:** “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions . . . And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (2:28,32).
- Main people:** Joel; possibly during the reign of King Joash or after the exile.
-

1. **The locust plague as a foretaste of the Day of the Lord 1:1–2:17**
 - a) The calamity 1:1–20
 - b) The scourge as the forerunner of the judgement day 2:1–17
2. **The averting of judgement and bestowal of blessings 2:18–3:21**
 - a) The Lord’s restoration of Judah 2:18–27
 - b) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit 2:28–32
 - c) Judgement upon the nations 3:1–16
 - d) The blessings on God’s people 3:17–21

Amos

Author: Amos, a herdsman from Tekoa (a small town 17 km from Jerusalem)

Time: 765–750 B.C.

Summary: The book of Amos was written during a period of national optimism in Israel. King Jeroboam II was ruler, and it was a time of great prosperity in which the kingdom had reached new political and military heights. It was also a time of idolatry, extravagant indulgence in luxury, immorality, corruption and oppression of the poor. Amos was called by God to pronounce judgement on the northern kingdom of Israel by denouncing Israel’s luxurious living, idolatry and moral depravity. Amos urges the people to repent before the judgements of God came upon them. “Seek God and live” was Amos’ plea to the nation. He also foretells of the dispersion of the Israelites, but points to a day when God would regather them in the land of their forefathers.

Key verses: “I hate, I despise your religious feasts: I cannot stand your assemblies . . . let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (5:21,24)

Main people: Amos was a contemporary of Hosea, and, late in his ministry, of Isaiah and Micah, King Uzziah ruled in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel.

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|---|------------------|
| 1. Judgements against the nations | 1:1–2:16 |
| a) Introduction | 1:1–2 |
| b) Judgement of neighbouring nations | 1:3–2:3 |
| c) Judgement of Judah and Israel | 2:4–16 |
| 2. Three oracles of judgement against Israel | 3:1–5:17 |
| a) A declaration of judgement | 3:1–15 |
| b) The depravity of Israel | 4:1–13 |
| c) A lamentation for Israel’s sin and doom | 5:1–17 |
| 3. Two oracles of woe against Israel | 5:18–6:14 |
| a) An oracle of woe against Israel’s perverted religion | 5:18–27 |
| b) An oracle of woe against Israel’s complacent pride | 6:1–14 |
| 4. Five visions of judgement against Israel | 7:1–9:10 |
| a) The devouring locusts | 7:1–3 |
| b) The flaming fire | 7:4–6 |
| c) The plumb line | 7:7–17 |
| d) The basket of ripe fruit | 8:1–14 |
| e) The judgement of the Lord | 9:1–10 |
| 5. The promise of Israel’s restoration | 9:11–15 |

Obadiah

Author: Obadiah

Time: 585–565 B.C.

Summary: Obadiah was a prophet who pronounced judgement upon the nation of Edom for its antagonism against Israel. Edom is the nation descended from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (Israel). Edom was to be punished for the violence against Israel they committed when invading the land.

Key verse: “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’ ” (1:3)

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Judgement on Edom | 2–14 |
| a) Edom’s destruction announced | 2–7 |
| b) Edom’s destruction reaffirmed | 8–14 |
| 2. The Day of the Lord | 15–21 |
| a) Judgement on the nations but deliverance for Zion | 15–18 |
| b) The Lord’s kingdom established | 19–21 |

Jonah

Author: Jonah

Time: 775–760 B.C.

Summary: The book describes Jonah’s commission to warn the city of Nineveh (the capital of Assyria) to repent and obey God’s commandments to avoid assured destruction. Jonah is reluctant to preach this message because Assyria is an enemy of Israel. So he heads for Tarshish instead, in the opposite direction. A storm arises, he is thrown overboard and is swallowed by a great fish, remaining in the belly of the fish for three days. Upon his release, he preaches the message to the people of Nineveh who believe his message and repent of their sins. Jonah is angry and God explains to him his love and forgiveness.

Key verse: “Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?” (4:11)

Main people: Jonah, sailors, people of Nineveh

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Jonah flees his mission | 1:1–17 |
| a) Jonah’s commission and flight | 1:1–3 |
| b) A storm at sea | 1:4–14 |
| c) Thrown overboard | 1:15–2:1 |
| d) Jonah’s prayer of thanksgiving | 2:2–10 |
| 2. Jonah reluctantly fulfils his mission | 3:1–4:11 |
| a) Jonah’s renewed commission and obedience | 3:1–4 |
| b) The Ninevites’ repentant appeal to the Lord | 3:5–9 |
| c) The Ninevites’ repentance acknowledged | 3:10–4:4 |
| d) Jonah’s complaint and rebuke | 4:5–11 |

Micah

Author: Micah

Time: 735–700 B.C.

Summary: Micah was contemporary with Isaiah and was to the southern kingdom of Judah what Amos had previously been to the northern kingdom of Israel. Both were fierce critics of the rich and powerful who exploited the poor. Micah’s leading ideas are the regeneration of Israel’s remnant through judgement, the establishment of the kingdom of God in the line of David, and the conversion of the nations through that kingdom. The conclusion of his prophecy is a triumphant expression of faith, seen in its true quality against the background of the materialism and the corruption of the reign of Ahaz.

Key verses: “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it” (4:1)

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|--|-----------------|
| 1. Judgement against Israel and Judah | 1:2–3:12 |
| a) Introduction | 1:1–2 |
| b) Predicted destruction | 1:3–7 |
| c) Lamentation for the destruction | 1:8–16 |
| d) Corruption in Micah’s society | 2:1–11 |
| e) Hope in the midst of gloom | 2:12–13 |
| f) The leaders condemned | 3:1–12 |
| 2. Hope for Israel and Judah | 4:1–5:15 |
| a) The coming Kingdom | 4:1–5:1 |
| b) The coming King | 5:2–15 |
| 3. The Lord’s case against Israel | 6:1–16 |
| a) The Lord’s accusation | 6:1–8 |
| b) The coming judgement | 6:9–16 |
| 4. Gloom turns to triumph | 7:1–20 |
| a) Micah laments the corruption of his society | 7:1–7 |
| b) A bright future for God’s people | 7:8–20 |

Nahum

Author: Nahum

Time: 620 B.C.

Summary: The book of Nahum was written approximately 140 years after the recorded events in the book of Jonah. During that period of time, Nineveh had turned from its repentant attitude and had taken the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. Whereas Jonah proclaimed a message of mercy and repentance, Nahum proclaimed an indictment of doom upon Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. They who were once used as God’s tool against the people of Israel and Jerusalem, would now be destroyed because of their great wickedness.

Key verses: “The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into darkness.” (1:7–8).

| | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Nineveh’s doom declared | 1:1–15 |
| a) Character of Nineveh’s judge | 1:1–8 |
| b) Declaration of Nineveh’s doom | 1:9–11 |
| c) Comfort to Nineveh’s oppressed | 1:12–15 |
| 2. Nineveh’s doom described | 2:1–13 |
| a) City besieged | 2:1–5 |
| b) City overwhelmed | 2:6–10 |
| c) City made desolate | 2:11–13 |
| 3. Nineveh’s doom deserved | 3:1–19 |
| a) Cause of the overthrow | 3:1–4 |
| b) Lesson of the overthrow | 3:5–13 |
| c) Certainty of the overthrow | 3:14–19 |

Habakkuk

Author: Habakkuk

Time: 620–605 B.C.

Summary: The book begins with Habakkuk complaining of injustice in Judah and his inability to understand God’s failure to judge the wicked and morally depraved nation of Babylon. Habakkuk is shown that God’s people must continue to trust in his mercy regardless of the circumstances about them. The wicked appear to prosper while the righteous are chastened. However this prosperity of the wicked is only temporary. God will not abandon those who obey and follow his commandments: “the just shall live by faith”.

Key verse: “LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.” (3:2)

1. **Habakkuk’s first complaint:** Why does evil in Judah go unpunished? **1:1–4**
2. **God’s answer:** The Babylonians will punish Judah **1:5–11**
3. **Habakkuk’s second complaint:** How can a just God use wicked Babylon to punish people more righteous than themselves? **1:12–2:1**
4. **God’s answer:** Babylon will be punished, faith will be rewarded **2:2–20**
5. **Habakkuk’s prayer** **3:1–19**

Zephaniah

Author: Zephaniah

Time: 635–615 B.C.

Summary: Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah. Josiah was responsible for a great religious reform following the wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon, who led the nation into various forms of idolatry. Zephaniah pronounces inescapable judgements against Jerusalem for their sins and exhorts national repentance. He further speaks of the “day of the Lord” when God will intervene to judge sin.

Key verse: “Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger” (2:3)

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|---|----------------|
| 1. Announcement of total judgement | 1:1–3 |
| 2. The day of the Lord coming on Judah and the nations | 1:4–18 |
| a) Judgement on idolaters in Judah | 1:4–9 |
| b) Wailing through Jerusalem | 1:10–13 |
| c) The inescapable day of the Lord’s wrath | 1:14–18 |
| 3. God’s judgement on the nations | 2:1–3:8 |
| a) Call to repentance | 2:1–3 |
| b) Judgement on Philistia | 2:4–7 |
| c) Judgement on Moab and Ammon | 2:8–11 |
| d) Judgement on Cush | 2:12 |
| e) Judgement on Assyria | 2:13–15 |
| f) Judgement on Jerusalem | 3:1–5 |
| g) Jerusalem’s refusal to repent | 3:6–8 |
| 4. Redemption of the remnant | 3:9–20 |
| a) The nations purified, the remnant restored, Jerusalem purged | 3:9–13 |
| b) Rejoicing in the city | 3:14–17 |
| c) The nation restored | 3:18–20 |

Haggai

Author: Haggai

Time: 520 B.C.

Summary: Haggai's four messages were given during a four-month period in 520 B.C.. He was contemporary with Zechariah. Both Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the Jews who had returned to Judah from their captivity in Babylon to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14). Haggai exhorts them to "consider their ways" and to complete the Temple whose foundation had been laid 18 years before. (The people responded and the Temple was completed in 516 B.C.) Haggai further pronounces that pagan empires will be overthrown by God and Judah will be elevated during the time of the Messiah.

Key verse: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little ... You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it ... build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured" (1:5-8).

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1. First message: the call to rebuild the temple 1:1-11
 2. The response of Zerubbabel and the people 1:12-15
 3. Second message: The temple to be filled with glory 2:1-9
 4. Third message: a defiled people purified and blessed 2:10-19
 5. Fourth message: the promise to Zerubbabel 2:20-23

Zechariah

Author: Zechariah

Time: 520–490 B.C.

Summary: Zechariah was a younger contemporary of Haggai. He also encouraged the people to rebuild the Temple. Like Daniel and Revelation, this book contains apocalyptic visions. It contains detailed references to the coming Messiah. The book concludes with descriptions of the enemies of Jerusalem being judged and of the future glory of God’s kingdom.

Key verse: “Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9:9).

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Introduction: The call to repent | 1:1–6 |
| 2. The night visions of Zechariah | 1:7–6:8 |
| a) Vision of the horses | 1:7–17 |
| b) Vision of the horns and craftsmen | 1:18–21 |
| c) Vision of the surveyor | 2:1–13 |
| d) Vision of Joshua the high priest | 3:1–10 |
| e) Vision of the golden lampstand and two olive trees | 4:1–14 |
| f) Vision of the flying scroll | 5:1–4 |
| g) Vision of the woman in a basket | 5:5–11 |
| h) Vision of the four chariots | 6:1–8 |
| 3. The crowning of Joshua | 6:9–15 |
| 4. Questions concerning fasting | 7:1–8:23 |
| a) The question | 7:1–3 |
| b) The lesson from history | 7:4–14 |
| c) God’s purpose of blessing for Israel | 8:1–23 |
| 5. The future of the nations, Israel and Messiah’s kingdom | 9:1–14:21 |
| a) The first oracle | 9:1–11:17 |
| b) The second oracle | 12:1–14:21 |

Malachi

Author: Malachi

Time: 430 B.C.

Summary: Malachi's message comes to the people in a time of great spiritual decline. It is approximately 80 years after the rebuilding of the temple and the promises of the coming Messiah have not yet been realised. As a result, the people had become lax and had an increasingly casual attitude toward God and worship. Malachi states that their sacrifices were unacceptable to God, husbands were unfaithful, and the priests had neglected God's covenants.

Key verse: " 'See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before men. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,' says the LORD Almighty" (3:1).

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|--|-----------------|
| 1. God's love for Israel affirmed | 1:1–5 |
| 2. Israel's unfaithfulness rebuked | 1:6–2:16 |
| a) The unfaithful priests | 1:6–2:9 |
| b) The unfaithful people | 2:10–16 |
| 3. The Lord's coming announced | 2:17–4:6 |
| a) The Lord will purify the priests and judge the people | 2:17–3:5 |
| b) A call to repentance | 3:6–18 |
| c) The day of the Lord announced | 4:1–6 |

GOSPELS

The word “gospel” comes from the Old English word “God-spell” and is a translation of the Greek word for “good news”. One of the oldest uses of the word in the ancient world was by a king’s herald, who announced the “glad tidings” of the king’s birthday as he went through the cities of the realm. This is just the meaning in our New Testament. The four Gospels announce the good news that God had sent his Messiah, Jesus, to the world, just as the Old Testament had promised.

The Gospels describe the birth of Jesus and his three and a half year ministry. Very little is recorded about his life before he began his ministry at the age of about 30. Even in recording his ministry, the Gospels are highly selective in the events recorded. They concentrate heavily on the last week of his ministry and the events surrounding his death. The Gospel of John, for example, spends 6 of its 21 chapters describing events which took place on one night—the night before Jesus died.

Why are there four gospels? Perhaps for the same reason different descriptions of a beautiful scenery would appeal to different people. Matthew describes one perspective of the life of Christ, Mark another, and Luke a third. These three gospels are so much alike that they are called the *Synoptic* (“see with” or “see alike”) Gospels. They all look at the life of Christ from a historical perspective. On the other hand, John’s gospel dwells more on the inner meaning of Jesus’ life and teaching, and tends to describe different events in his ministry from those described in the Synoptic Gospels.

Matthew

Author: Matthew

Time: 6 B.C. – A.D. 30

Summary: Matthew writes for a Jewish audience. His purpose is to witness that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and that he fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies. Matthew makes no fewer than 60 references to the Old Testament writings as fulfilled in Christ, so that the word “fulfilled” becomes characteristic of the book. The Jews placed great importance on Scripture, and this Gospel abounds in such references. Matthew emphasises the words of the Lord regarding the kingdom of heaven, possibly to counter the popular Jewish belief of the day that the Messiah would be a militant leader who would overthrow the current Roman occupation and re-establish the throne of David.

The whole Gospel is woven around five great speeches of Jesus: (1) ch. 5–7; (2) ch. 10; (3) ch. 13; (4) ch. 18; (5) ch. 24–28. Each speech concludes with the words “When Jesus had finished saying these things . . .”

Key verse: “All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’—which means ‘God with us’.” (1:22–23).

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|--|-------------------|
| 1. The birth and early years of Jesus | 1–2 |
| a) His genealogy | 1:1–17 |
| b) His birth | 1:18–2:12 |
| c) His sojourn in Egypt | 2:13–23 |
| 2. The beginnings of Jesus’ ministry | 3:1–4:11 |
| a) The ministry of John the Baptist | 3:1–12 |
| b) The baptism of Jesus | 3:13–17 |
| c) The temptation of Jesus | 4:1–11 |
| 3. Jesus’ ministry in Galilee | 4:12–14:12 |
| a) The beginning of the Galilean campaign | 4:12–25 |
| b) Jesus’ teaching on discipleship | 5–7 |
| c) A selection of Jesus’ miracles | 8–9 |
| d) The commissioning of the 12 apostles | 10 |
| e) Responses to Jesus | 11–12 |
| f) Parables | 13:1–53 |
| g) Further responses to Jesus | 13:54–58 |
| h) Death of John the Baptist | 14:1–12 |

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| 4. Jesus' withdrawals from Galilee | 14:13–17:20 |
| a) To the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee | 14:13–15:20 |
| b) To Phoenicia | 15:21–28 |
| c) To the Decapolis | 15:29–16:12 |
| d) To Caesarea Philippi | 16:13–20 |
| e) Jesus predicts his death | 16:21–28 |
| f) Jesus is transfigured | 17:1–20 |
| 5. Jesus' last ministry in Galilee | 17:22–18:35 |
| a) Prediction of Jesus' death | 17:22–23 |
| b) Temple tax | 17:24–27 |
| c) Teaching on relationships among the disciples | 18 |
| 6. Jesus' ministry in Judea and Perea | 19–20 |
| a) Teaching on divorce | 19:1–12 |
| b) Teaching on little children | 19:13–15 |
| c) The rich young man | 19:16–30 |
| d) The parable of the workers in the vineyard | 20:1–16 |
| e) Prediction of Jesus' death | 20:17–19 |
| f) A mother's request | 20:20–28 |
| g) Healing blind men at Jericho | 20:29–34 |
| 7. Jesus' last week | 21–27 |
| a) The triumphal entry | 21:1–11 |
| b) The cleansing of the temple | 21:12–17 |
| c) The last controversies with the Jewish leaders | 21:18–23:39 |
| d) The Olivet prophecy concerning the end of the age | 24–25 |
| e) The anointing of Jesus' feet | 26:1–16 |
| f) The Last Supper and Gethsemane | 26:17–46 |
| g) The arrest, trials and death of Jesus | 26:47–27:66 |
| 8. The resurrection of Jesus | 28 |

Mark

Author: Mark

Time: A.D. 26–30

Summary: Mark’s overall picture of the life of Christ is more complete than the other Gospels, even though it is the shortest, and therefore more concise. Mark emphasises the larger-than-life, wondrous nature of Jesus. The book of Mark is thought to be aimed at a non-Jewish audience (in particular, Romans). There are very few references to the Old Testament Scriptures contained in this Gospel. Jewish words are explained (3:17; 5:41; 7:11,34; 10:36); and also Jewish customs (7:3–4; 14:12; 15:42). Latin expressions are frequently used such as Legion, Centurion, etc. The Romans admired action, and this Gospel depicts Jesus as a worker.

Key verses: “Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’ ” (1:14–15)

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|---|------------------|
| 1. The beginnings of Jesus’ ministry | 1:1–13 |
| a) The ministry of John the Baptist | 1:1–8 |
| b) The baptism of Jesus | 1:9–11 |
| c) The temptation of Jesus | 1:12–13 |
| 2. Jesus’ early ministry in Galilee | 1:14–3:12 |
| a) Call of the first disciples | 1:14–20 |
| b) Miracles in Capernaum | 1:21–34 |
| c) A tour of Galilee | 1:35–45 |
| d) Ministry in Capernaum | 2:1–22 |
| e) Sabbath controversy | 2:23–3:12 |
| 3. Jesus’ later ministry in Galilee | 3:13–6:29 |
| a) Selection of the 12 apostles | 3:13–19 |
| b) Teachings in Capernaum | 3:20–35 |
| c) Parables of the kingdom | 4:1–34 |
| d) Trip across the Sea of Galilee | 4:35–5:20 |
| e) More Galilean miracles | 5:21–43 |
| f) Unbelief in Jesus’ home town | 6:1–6 |
| g) Six teams of apostles tour Galilee | 6:7–13 |
| h) King Herod’s reaction to Jesus’ ministry | 6:14–29 |

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| 4. Jesus' withdrawals from Galilee | 6:30–9:32 |
| a) To the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee | 6:30–52 |
| b) To the western shore of the Sea of Galilee | 6:53–7:23 |
| c) To Phoenicia | 7:24–30 |
| d) To the region of the Decapolis | 7:31–8:10 |
| e) To the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi | 8:11–9:32 |
| 5. Jesus' last ministry in Galilee | 9:33–50 |
| 6. Jesus' ministry in Judea and Perea | 10 |
| a) Teaching on divorce | 10:1–12 |
| b) Teaching on children | 10:13–16 |
| c) The rich young man | 10:17–31 |
| d) Prediction of Jesus' death | 10:32–34 |
| e) A request of two brothers | 10:35–45 |
| f) Healing a blind man at Jericho | 10:46–52 |
| 7. Jesus' last week | 11–15 |
| a) The triumphal entry | 11:1–11 |
| b) The cleansing of the temple | 11:12–19 |
| c) The last controversies with the Jewish leaders | 11:20–12:44 |
| d) The Olivet prophecy concerning the end of the age | 13 |
| e) The anointing of Jesus | 14:1–11 |
| f) The Last Supper and Gethsemane | 14:12–42 |
| g) The arrest, trial and death of Jesus | 14:43–15:47 |
| 8. The resurrection of Jesus | 16 |

Luke

Author: Luke

Time: 6 B.C.–A.D. 30

Summary: Luke (who also wrote the book of Acts) was a Greek physician. His book emphasises the humanity of Jesus and his compassion, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer. He describes Jesus' acceptance of Gentiles, women, children and the poor. The writing is characterised by historical detail and a warm, sensitive understanding of Jesus and of those around him.

Luke's Gospel was written particularly for Greeks who delighted in wisdom, beauty and system. Luke tells the story of Jesus, unfolding his development in a systematic manner. Luke was an artist with the pen, drawing the portrait of Jesus as the perfect man.

Key verse: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it" (9:23–24)

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|--|-----------------|
| 1. The Preface | 1:1–4 |
| 2. The coming of Jesus | 1:5–2:52 |
| a) The predictions of Jesus' birth | 1:5–56 |
| b) The birth of John the Baptist | 1:57–80 |
| c) The birth and childhood of Jesus | 2 |
| 3. The preparation of Jesus for his public ministry | 3:1–4:13 |
| a) His forerunner | 3:1–20 |
| b) His baptism | 3:21–22 |
| c) His genealogy | 3:23–38 |
| d) His temptation | 4:1–13 |
| 4. Jesus' ministry in Galilee | 4:24–9:9 |
| a) The beginning of the ministry in Galilee | 4:14–41 |
| b) The first tour of Galilee | 4:42–5:39 |
| c) A Sabbath controversy | 6:1–11 |
| d) The choice of the 12 apostles | 6:12–16 |
| e) The sermon | 6:17–49 |
| f) Miracles in Capernaum and Nain | 7:1–18 |
| g) The inquiry of John the Baptist | 7:19–29 |
| h) Jesus and the Pharisees | 7:30–50 |
| i) The second tour of Galilee | 8:1–3 |
| j) The parables of the kingdom | 8:4–21 |
| k) The trip across the Sea of Galilee | 8:40–9:9 |

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| 5. Jesus' withdrawals from Galilee | 9:10–50 |
| a) To the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee | 9:10–17 |
| b) To Caesarea Philippi | 9:18–50 |
| 6. Jesus' ministry in Judea | 9:51–13:21 |
| a) Journey through Samaria to Judea | 9:51–62 |
| b) The mission of the 70 | 10:1–24 |
| c) The lawyer and the parable of the Good Samaritan | 10:25–37 |
| d) Jesus at Bethany with Mary and Martha | 10:38–42 |
| e) Teachings in Judea | 11:1–13:21 |
| 7. Jesus' ministry in Perea | 13:22–19:27 |
| a) The narrow door | 13:22–30 |
| b) Warning about Herod | 13:31–35 |
| c) At a Pharisee's house | 14:1–23 |
| d) The cost of discipleship | 14:24–35 |
| e) Some parables | 15–16 |
| f) Miscellaneous teachings | 17:1–10 |
| g) Ten healed of leprosy | 17:11–19 |
| h) The coming of the kingdom | 17:20–37 |
| i) The persistent widow | 18:1–8 |
| j) The Pharisee and tax collector | 18:9–14 |
| k) Jesus and the children | 18:15–17 |
| l) The rich young ruler | 18:18–30 |
| m) Prediction of Jesus' death | 18:31–34 |
| n) Healing a blind man at Jericho | 18:35–43 |
| o) Zacchaeus | 19:1–10 |
| p) The parable of the 10 minas | 19:11–27 |
| 8. Jesus' last week | 19:28–23:56 |
| a) The triumphal entry | 19:28–44 |
| b) The cleansing of the temple | 19:45–48 |
| c) The last controversies with the Jewish leaders | 20 |
| d) The Olivet prophecy concerning the end of the age | 21 |
| e) The Last supper and Gethsemane | 22:1–46 |
| f) The arrest, trial and death of Jesus | 22:47–23:56 |
| 9. The resurrection of Jesus | 24 |
| a) Jesus is raised | 24:1–12 |
| b) The post-resurrection ministry | 24:13–49 |
| c) Jesus ascends to heaven | 24:50–52 |

John

Author: John

Time: A.D. 26–30

Summary: John says that he wrote so that people might come to believe in Christ (20:30–31). He was not as interested in the historical order of the events in the life of Christ, or in his deeds, as he was in the inner meaning of his teaching. John emphasises Jesus as the son of God, sent by God to be the saviour of the earth.

There are several key words in John’s Gospel, including “believe” which occurs over eighty times. The word implies a belief that has developed into faith or conviction. Another peculiarity is the frequent use of the word “Jew”. It is only found once in Matthew, twice in Mark and in Luke, but over sixty times in John.

John concerns himself more with the Judean ministry which Matthew and Mark hardly touch upon, and he records only eight miracles (which he terms “signs”) to show that Jesus was the Son of God. John is the only book of the four Gospels that does not cite any parables.

Key verses: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry” (6:35).

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live” (11:25).

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (14:6)

“These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (20:31).

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| 1. Prologue | 1:1–18 |
| 2. Beginnings of Jesus’ ministry | 1:19–51 |
| a) His forerunner | 1:19–34 |
| b) Jesus’ introduction to some future disciples | 1:35–51 |
| 3. Jesus’ ministry: signs and discourses | 2–11 |
| a) Changing water into wine | 2:1–11 |
| b) Cleansing the temple | 2:12–25 |
| c) Interview with Nicodemus | 3:1–21 |
| d) Parallel ministry with John the Baptist | 3:22–4:3 |
| e) Journey through Samaria: woman at the well | 4:4–42 |

| | |
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| f) Healing of the official's son | 4:43–54 |
| g) Trip to Jerusalem | 5 |
| h) Feeding of the 5000 and sermon on the bread of life | 6 |
| i) Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles | 7–8 |
| j) Healing of the man born blind | 9 |
| k) Parable of the Good Shepherd | 10:1–21 |
| l) Debating at the Feast of Dedication | 10:22–39 |
| m) Ministry in Perea | 10:40–42 |
| n) The raising of Lazarus | 11 |
| 4. Jesus' last week | 12–19 |
| a) The anointing of Jesus' feet | 12:1–11 |
| b) The triumphal entry | 12:12–19 |
| c) The coming of the Greeks | 12:20–36 |
| d) Continued Jewish unbelief | 12:37–50 |
| e) Discourse at the Last Supper | 13–14 |
| f) Discourse on the way to Gethsemane | 15–16 |
| g) Jesus' prayer of intercession | 17 |
| h) His arrest, trial and crucifixion | 18:1–19:42 |
| 5. The resurrection | 20:1–29 |
| 6. Epilogue | 20:30–21:25 |

Acts of the Apostles

Author: Luke

Time: A.D. 30–60

Summary: The book of Acts is the only book of history in the New Testament—compared with 12 in the Old Testament. It was written by Luke as a sequel to follow his gospel. Acts records the establishment and growth of the first century church. It illustrates the struggles and problems that they faced, and describes the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the early church and the missionary work of Peter and Paul. In particular, the book traces the missionary journeys of Paul as he helped form churches throughout Asia Minor and Rome.

Key verse: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (1:8)

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Prologue | 1:1–2 |
| 2. The beginnings of the church in Jerusalem | 1–12 |
| a) Jesus’ ministry after his resurrection | 1:3–11 |
| b) A new apostle | 1:12–26 |
| c) The filling with the Spirit | 2 |
| d) The healing of the lame man | 3:1–4:31 |
| e) The community of goods | 4:32–5:11 |
| f) The arrest of the 12 apostles | 5:12–42 |
| g) The choice of the Seven | 6:1–7 |
| h) Stephen’s arrest and death | 6:8–7:60 |
| i) The scattering of the Jerusalem believers | 8:1–4 |
| 3. Philip’s ministry | 8:5–40 |
| a) In Samaria | 8:5–25 |
| b) To the Ethiopian eunuch | 8:26–40 |
| 4. Saul’s conversion | 9:1–31 |
| 5. Peter’s ministry | 9:32–11:18 |
| a) To Aeneas and Dorcas | 9:32–43 |
| b) To Cornelius | 10:1–11:18 |
| 6. The church in Antioch | 11:19–30 |
| 7. Herod’s persecution and subsequent death | 12 |
| 8. Paul’s first missionary journey | 13–14 |

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| 9. The Jerusalem conference | 15:1–35 |
| 10. Paul’s second missionary journey | 15:36–18:22 |
| 11. Paul’s third missionary journey | 18:23–21:16 |
| 12. Paul arrested and sent to Rome | 21:17–28:31 |
| a) Arrested in Jerusalem and sent to Caesarea | 21:17–23:35 |
| b) Imprisoned in Caesarea | 24–26 |
| c) Voyage to Rome | 27:1–28:15 |
| d) Two years under house arrest in Rome | 28:16–31 |

Romans

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 57

Summary: Paul begins the letter by showing how Jews and Gentiles alike are sinners in the eyes of God and therefore worthy of death. However, Paul explains that our sins can be forgiven through Jesus Christ if we accept all that he said and follow him in faith. With this in mind, Paul explains that Israel too, though presently in a state of unbelief, has a place in God's plan of redemption. The letter concludes with an appeal to the readers to work out their Christian faith in practical ways.

Key verses: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."
(3:23–24)

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–17 |
| 2. The unrighteousness of all mankind | 1:16–3:20 |
| a) Gentiles | 1:18–32 |
| b) Jews | 2:1–3:8 |
| c) Summary: all people | 3:9–20 |
| 3. Righteousness imputed: justification | 3:21–5:21 |
| a) Through Christ | 3:21–26 |
| b) Received by faith | 3:27–4:25 |
| c) The fruits of righteousness | 5:1–11 |
| d) Summary: man's righteousness contrasted with God's gift | 5:12–21 |
| 4. Righteousness imparted: sanctification | 6–8 |
| a) Freedom from sin's tyranny | 6 |
| b) Freedom from the law's condemnation | 7 |
| c) Life in the power of the Holy Spirit | 8 |
| 5. The problem of the rejection of Israel | 9–11 |
| a) The justice and cause of the rejection | 9:1–10:21 |
| b) The restoration of Israel | 11 |
| 6. The Gospel in practice | 12:1–15:13 |
| a) in the body—the church | 12 |
| b) in the world | 13 |
| c) among weak and strong Christians | 14:1–15:13 |
| 7. Conclusion and Greetings | 15:14–16:27 |

1 Corinthians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 55

Summary: Written to the church at Corinth by the apostle Paul. He deals with a series of problems, sins and false teachings that were present in the newly formed church. Most members were from a promiscuous pagan background and were exhorted to put away their previous ways. Paul's purposes for writing were: (1) to instruct and restore the church in its areas of weakness, correcting erroneous practices such as divisions, immorality, litigation and abuse of the Lord's supper; (2) to correct false teaching concerning the resurrection; and (3) to give instruction concerning the offering for the poverty-stricken believers in Jerusalem.

Key verse: "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1:10)

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–9 |
| 2. Responses to their letter | 1:10–6:20 |
| a) The problem of division in the church | 1:10–4:21 |
| b) The problem of the immoral brother | 5:1–13 |
| c) The problem of lawsuits | 6:1–11 |
| d) The problem of sexual immorality | 6:12–20 |
| 3. Instruction about marriage | 7 |
| 4. Instruction on questionable practices | 8:1–11:1 |
| a) The principles involved | 8 |
| b) The principles illustrated | 9 |
| c) A warning from Israel's history | 10:1–22 |
| d) The principles applied | 10:23–11:1 |
| 5. Instruction on public worship | 11:2–14:40 |
| a) Women in the church | 11:2–16 |
| b) The Lord's supper | 11:17–34 |
| c) Spirit gifts | 12:1–14:40 |
| 6. Instruction on the resurrection | 15 |
| 7. Conclusion: practical and personal matters | 16 |

2 Corinthians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 55

Summary: This second letter to the church at Corinth was penned by Paul also. It was written after he made a “painful” visit to the small church in an attempt to give instruction and guidance on several divisive issues. Upon learning that a majority of members had repented, he wrote the letter of 2nd Corinthians. It gives encouragement, yet teaches of the suffering that each member must face for the Lord Jesus sake. He concludes by surmising when he is weakest, then God is able to work through him most powerfully. This letter was probably written about six months after the first letter to the Corinthians.

Key verse: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (5:20).

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Greeting and thanksgiving | 1:1–11 |
| 2. Paul’s explanation of his conduct and ministry | 1:12–7 :16 |
| a) His motives | 1:12–2:4 |
| b) Forgiving the offender at Corinth | 2:5–11 |
| c) God’s direction in his ministry | 2:12–17 |
| d) The Corinthian believers: a letter from Christ | 3:1–11 |
| e) Seeing the glory of God | 3:12–4:6 |
| f) Treasure in clay jars | 4:7–16a |
| g) The prospect of death for a Christian | 4:16b–5:10 |
| h) The ministry of reconciliation | 5:11–6:10 |
| i) A spiritual father’s appeal to his children | 6:11–7:4 |
| j) The meeting with Titus | 7:5–16 |
| 3. The collection for the Christians at Jerusalem | 8–9 |
| a) Generosity encouraged | 8:1–15 |
| b) Titus and his companions sent to Corinth | 8:16–9:5 |
| c) Results of generous giving | 9:6–15 |
| 4. Paul’s vindication of his apostolic authority | 10–13 |
| a) Paul’s defence of his authority | 10 |
| b) Paul forced into foolish boasting | 11–12 |
| 5. Final warnings and conclusion | 13 |
| a) Final warnings | 13:1–10 |
| b) Conclusion | 13:11–14 |

Galatians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 49

Summary: The letter to the believers in Galatia focuses on the divisions that Jewish Christians were causing among new Gentile converts. These ‘Judaizers’ were trying to convince the Gentiles that they needed to be circumcised and to keep the ritual law in order to be saved. Paul argues that both Jew and Gentile alike enjoy in Christ complete salvation. Reliance on the Law was only a bondage to death and could not produce life-giving freedom, as only Christ could grant that freedom. Paul was showing that all legalistic variations of the Gospel are perversions of it and should be shown as such.

Key verse: “We, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified” (2:16)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–9 |
| a) Greetings | 1:1–5 |
| b) Purpose of letter | 1:6–9 |
| 2. Paul’s defence of his apostleship | 1:10–2:14 |
| a) Paul called by God | 1:10–24 |
| b) Paul accepted by apostles | 2:1–10 |
| c) Paul opposes Peter at Antioch | 2:11–14 |
| 3. Salvation by faith not law | 2:15–4:31 |
| a) Justified by faith in Christ | 2:15–21 |
| b) The Galatians’ experience at conversion | 3:1–5 |
| c) Experience of Abraham | 3:6–9 |
| d) Curse of the law | 3:10–14 |
| e) Promises before the law | 3:15–18 |
| f) Purpose of the law | 3:19–25 |
| g) Sons not slaves | 3:26–4:11 |
| h) Personal appeal | 4:12–20 |
| i) Allegory of Hagar and Sarah | 4:21–31 |
| 4. The life of liberty and faith | 5:1–6:10 |
| a) Exhortation to freedom | 5:1–12 |
| b) Liberty is not licence | 5:13–15 |
| c) Life by the Spirit, not by the flesh | 5:13–26 |
| d) Doing good to all | 6:1–10 |
| 5. Conclusion | 6:11–18 |

Ephesians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 61

Summary: The letter is divided into two sections. The first outlines the spiritual riches in Christ and our part in God’s eternal purpose; the second discusses practical ways in which we can fulfil God’s purpose. The intent was to illustrate the abundance of spiritual riches that Christ himself received or would receive, namely grace, glory, mercy, immortality, and to foster the incentive to walk as Christ himself did. By doing so, believers would learn to walk worthy of their calling. It is thought that this letter was a circular letter, intended for other churches in addition to the one in Ephesus.

Key verse: “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace” (2:6–7).

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Greetings | 1:1–2 |
| 2. Spiritual blessings in Christ | 1:3–23 |
| a) The divine purpose | 1:3–14 |
| b) Prayer that Christians may know God better | 1:15–23 |
| 3. Steps toward the fulfilment of God’s purpose | 2–3 |
| a) Salvation of individuals by grace | 2:1–10 |
| b) Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile through Christ | 2:11–22 |
| c) Revelation of God’s wisdom through the church | 3:1–13 |
| d) Prayer for deeper experience of God’s fullness | 3:14–21 |
| 4. Practical ways to fulfil God’s purpose | 4:1–6:20 |
| a) Unity and maturity | 4:1–16 |
| b) Renewal of personal life | 4:17–5:20 |
| c) Consideration in personal relationships | 5:21–6:9 |
| d) Strength in spiritual conflict | 6:10–20 |
| 5. Conclusion and final greetings | 6:21–24 |

Philippians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 62

Summary: Paul's main purpose in writing this letter seems to have been to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him when they heard he had been imprisoned at Rome (1:5; 4:10–19). But Paul also discusses several other issues. He encourages the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and exhorts them to humility and unity. He also commends Timothy and Epaphroditus to the church and warns the Philippians against people who encourage a return to the Jewish law. The letter is outstanding in its emphasis on joy; the word 'joy' occurs 16 times.

Key verse: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (4:6–7)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Greetings and thanksgiving | 1:1–11 |
| 2. Paul's personal circumstances | 1:12–26 |
| 3. Exhortations | 1:27–2:18 |
| a) Living a life worthy of the gospel | 1:27–30 |
| b) Following the servant attitude of Christ | 2:1–18 |
| 4. Timothy and Epaphroditus | 2:19–30 |
| 5. Warnings against false teachers | 3:1–4:1 |
| 6. Final exhortations, thanks and conclusion | 4:2–23 |
| a) Exhortations | 4:2–9 |
| b) Thanks | 4:10–20 |
| c) Greetings and benediction | 4:21–23 |

Colossians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 61

Summary: The letter to Colosse was written in response to heresy that had been brought to Paul's attention. The major errors that had crept into the church seemed to have been: (1) the exaltation of angels or other "elemental spirits"; (2) the emphasis on ascetic or liturgical practices thought to produce spirituality; and (3) those in error claimed a special knowledge beyond that found in the Gospel of Christ. Paul states that these are philosophies based on human tradition and are therefore worthless. He teaches love, humility, submission to authority, and finally prayer to establish a believer in the wisdom of God.

Key verse: "See, to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (2:8)

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–14 |
| 2. The supremacy of Christ | 1:15–23 |
| 3. Paul's labour for the church | 1:24–2:7 |
| 4. Freedom from human regulations through life with Christ | 2:8–23 |
| 5. Rules for holy living | 3:1–4:6 |
| 6. Final greetings | 4:7–18 |

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 51

Summary: Paul had left Thessalonica abruptly after a rather brief stay (see Acts 17:5–10). Recent converts were left with little support in the midst of persecution. Paul’s purpose in writing these letters was to encourage the new converts in their trials, to give instruction concerning godly living, to urge some not to neglect the daily work, to give assurance about the future of believers who die before Jesus returns and to explain some events which must take place before Jesus returns.

Key verse: “May [the Lord] strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.” (1 Thess 3:13)

1 Thessalonians

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians | 1:1–10 |
| 2. Paul’s ministry to the Thessalonians | 2:1–3:13 |
| a) Paul’s ministry when in Thessalonica | 2:1–16 |
| b) Paul’s longing to see the Thessalonians | 2:17–3:13 |
| 3. Exhortations | 4:1–5:22 |
| a) Concerning personal life | 4:1–12 |
| b) Concerning the coming of Christ | 4:13–5:11 |
| c) Miscellaneous instructions | 5:12–22 |
| 4. Concluding prayer, greetings and benediction | 5:23–28 |

2 Thessalonians

| | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Instruction | 2 |
| a) Prophecy regarding the day of the Lord | 2:1–12 |
| b) Thanks and prayer for the Thessalonians | 2:13–17 |
| 3. Exhortations | 3 |
| a) Call to prayer | 3:1–3 |
| b) Warning against idleness | 3:4–15 |
| 4. Conclusion, greeting and benediction | 3:16–18 |

1 Timothy

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 64

Summary: Timothy was a leader in the church at Ephesus. Paul wrote both letters to warn, instruct and encourage Timothy in the work of leading the church and fulfilling his duty. In the first letter, Paul gives warnings about false teachers and detailed instructions about the selection of qualified leaders and requirements for the behaviour of different groups of people.

Key verses: “I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” (3:14–15)

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–20 |
| a) Greeting | 1:1–2 |
| b) Warnings | 1:3–11 |
| 2. Instructions for Timothy | 1:12–6:10 |
| a) Paul’s calling and Timothy’s | 1:12–2:7 |
| b) Instructions for worship | 2:8–15 |
| c) Qualifications of leaders | 3:1–16 |
| d) Coming problems and advice about people | 4:1–6:10 |
| 3. Paul’s charge to Timothy | 6:11–21 |

2 Timothy

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 67

Summary: In his second letter to Timothy, Paul shows concern for believers during a time of persecution under Nero. He is full of encouragement for Timothy, urging him to remain true to his faith and to lead others in the same path. After warning of coming godlessness, Paul concludes with a reminder that scripture is given to teach goodness and charges Timothy that he must preach the gospel at all times.

Key verses: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (3:16–17)

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Encouragement for Timothy | 1:1–18 |
| a) Introduction and encouragement | 1:1–2:13 |
| b) Instructing others | 2:14–26 |
| 2. Coming Godlessness | 3:1–13 |
| 3. Timothy’s responsibility | 3:10–4:5 |
| 4. Paul’s situation and final remarks | 4:6–22 |

Titus

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 64

Summary: This letter was written by Paul from Rome to Titus whom he had left to care for the churches on the island of Crete. The letter provides Titus with instruction and advice for his conduct in dealing with the believers in Crete.

Key verses: “The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.” (2:11–12)

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Greetings and introduction | 1:1–4 |
| 2. Titus’ task | 1:5–3:15 |
| a) Appointing leaders | 1:5–16 |
| b) What to teach different groups | 2:1–15 |
| c) Insist that believers do good | 3:1–15 |

Philemon

Author: Paul

Time: A.D. 61

Summary: Paul writes to Philemon whose slave, Onesimus, had run away to Rome where he met Paul and became a Christian. Paul sends him back to his rightful owner with his personal letter of recommendation to accept him back with love as a brother.

Key verse: “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ” (1:6).

1. Greeting and thanksgiving 1–7
2. Paul’s plea for Onesimus 8–21
3. Conclusion and final greetings 22–25

Hebrews

Author: unknown

Time: before A.D. 70

Summary: This letter presents the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant as seen in the Law of Moses. It is sometimes called the “book of better things” because of the frequent description of the new covenant as better or superior to the law familiar to the Jewish Christians who were to receive the letter. The main goal of the letter was to demonstrate that Jesus was the fulfilment of the symbols in the law and prophecies of the Messiah. With Jesus sacrificed as a sinless man, the need for repeated animal sacrifice was removed and the transient priesthood replaced by the eternal priesthood of Jesus.

Key verses: “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” (1:1–2).

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (11:6)

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Prologue | 1:1–14 |
| a) The superiority of God’s new revelation through Jesus | 1:1–4 |
| b) Old Testament support for this superiority | 1:5–14 |
| 2. Jesus is superior to the old covenant | 2:1–7:28 |
| a) Jesus made like his brothers to make salvation possible | 2:1–18 |
| b) Jesus greater than Moses | 3:1–6 |
| c) Warning about missing out on Sabbath rest | 3:7–4:13 |
| d) Jesus of a better priesthood than Aaron | 4:14–7:28 |
| e) Jesus in the priestly order of Melchizedek | 7:1–28 |
| 3. Jesus High Priest of a new covenant | 8:1–10:39 |
| a) Christ the High Priest | 8:1–13 |
| b) Examples from the tabernacle | 9:1–10 |
| c) The blood of Christ offered once for all | 9:11–10:18 |
| d) A believer’s rights and responsibilities arising | 10:19–39 |
| 4. Faith | 11:1–12:28 |
| a) Examples of faith | 11:1–40 |
| b) God’s discipline | 12:1–13 |
| c) Warning against refusing God’s offer | 12:14–29 |
| 5. Conclusion | 13:1–25 |

James

Author: James

Time: A.D. 43–50

Summary: The letter is a very practical review of the Christian faith in the life of a believer. Addressing the everyday problems of temptation, listening, favouritism, faith, taming the tongue, submission, patience and sickness, James gives clear and encouraging advice on how to advance in godliness. It is not directed at any particular church, but rather to Jewish believers in general.

Key verses: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (1:22).

“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” (2:17)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Trials and temptation | 1:1–18 |
| 2. Faith in action | 1:19–5:12 |
| a) Hearing and doing what is right | 1:19–27 |
| b) Favouritism forbidden | 2:1–13 |
| c) Faith without works is dead | 2:14–26 |
| d) Taming the tongue | 3:1–12 |
| e) Submitting to God and his wisdom | 3:13–4:17 |
| f) Warning to rich | 5:1–6 |
| g) Perseverance in suffering | 5:7–11 |
| h) The effectiveness of the prayer of faith | 5:13–20 |
| 3. The prayer of faith | 5:13–20 |

1 Peter

Author: Peter

Time: A.D. 60

Summary: This letter was a general letter written to Christians in Asia Minor to help build a joyful hope in the face of persecution. After confirming the grace of God in giving salvation to the chosen, Peter commands submission to authorities—despite persecution. He also shows that enduring suffering for Christ holds the promise of life forever.

Key verses: “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed . . . If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (4:14,16).

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–2 |
| 2. The hope of salvation | 1:3–12 |
| 3. God’s requirements for life | 1:13–5:11 |
| a) Being holy as God’s people | 1:13–2:12 |
| b) Submission to authorities | 2:13–25 |
| c) Living for God | 3:1–4:11 |
| d) Suffering for being a Christian | 4:12–19 |
| e) Instruction to different groups | 5:1–11 |
| 4. Final greetings | 5:12–14 |

2 Peter

Author: Peter

Time: A.D. 66

Summary: Peter encourages the Christians to be sure of salvation by putting true doctrine into practice and dealing with false teachers. The letter is written to encourage Christian growth, while fighting wrong doctrine and false teachers.

Key verse: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (3:9)

1. How to make one’s salvation sure 1:1–11
2. Peter’s reason for writing 1:12–21
3. False teachers: their behaviour and end 2:1–22
4. The day of the Lord 3:1–22

1 John

Author: John

Time: A.D. 85–95

Summary: This letter seems to have been a circular letter to several communities who faced a common problem—probably the beginnings of the Gnostic heresy. John wants to restate the importance of leading a moral and sinless life, avoiding the false teachings which would lead them away from the grace of Christ, their advocate and atoning sacrifice. John repeatedly encourages them to love one another and to hold their faith in the Son of God.

Key verse: “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One” (2:1)

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1:1–4 |
| 2. Walking in God’s light | 1:5–2:14 |
| 3. Warnings about the world and antichrists | 2:15–27 |
| 4. God’s love for his children and their response | 2:28–5:21 |
| a) Christians are children of God and should love | 2:28–3:24 |
| b) Test the spirits | 4:1–6 |
| c) God is love | 4:7–21 |
| d) Love for God’s son gives life | 5:1–21 |

2 John

Author: John

Time: A.D. 85–95

Summary: During the early growth of the church, the gospel was spread by travelling preachers. Preachers could also travel spreading different teachings. This letter is addressed to “an elect lady” who is advised not to have fellowship with those teachers who bring wrong doctrine. The ideas of love, truth, and obedience are emphasised.

Key verses: “I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands” (1:5–6).

| | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Introduction | 1–4 |
| 2. Love defined | 5–6 |
| 3. False teachers and antichrists | 7–11 |
| 4. Conclusion | 12–13 |

3 John

Author: John

Time: A.D. 85–95

Summary: John had sent brothers with letters to one of the churches but a leader, Diotrephes, refused to accept the brothers or the letter they carried. The letter commends Gaius for welcoming these brothers and also warns Diotrephes.

Key verse: “I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (1:2).

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Greetings to Gaius | 1–8 |
| 2. Criticism of Diotrephes | 9–11 |
| 3. Praise of Demetrius | 12 |
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Jude

Author: Jude

Time: 70–80 A.D.

Summary: Jude wrote his letter to reaffirm and combat the danger of false teachers within the church. Using examples from history he emphasizes the trouble such teachers can cause and reminds his audience of the need to fight for the truth they had received.

Key verses: “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit” (1:18–19).

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| 1. Introduction | 1–2 |
| 2. Godless men—their sin and ultimate doom | 3–16 |
| 3. Exhortation to perseverance | 17–23 |
| 4. Doxology | 24–25 |

Revelation

Author: John

Time: A.D. 95

Summary: This is the final book of the Bible, written to provide a continuing message for the young church. Although it starts with letters from Jesus to seven churches in Asia, the majority of the book describes amazing visions of the future. John, one of Jesus' apostles, receives a detailed vision of events surrounding the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The vision is highly symbolic and reveals the apostasy of the church and the judgements of those who are held accountable. The final triumph of Jesus and the reward of righteous people is a fitting climax to the book and the entire Bible.

Key verse: "They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen, and faithful followers" (17:14).

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| 1. Introduction | 1:1–20 |
| a) Prologue | 1:1–3 |
| b) Greeting and doxology | 1:4–8 |
| 2. Letters to the 7 churches | 2:1–3:22 |
| a) Jesus the author | 1:9–20 |
| b) To Ephesus | 2:1–7 |
| c) To Smyrna | 2:8–11 |
| d) To Pergamum | 2:12–17 |
| e) To Thyatira | 2:18–27 |
| f) To Sardis | 3:1–6 |
| g) To Philadelphia | 3:7–13 |
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| 3. The throne, the scroll and the lamb | 4:1–5:14 |
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| 4. Opening the seven seals | 6:1–8:1 |
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| 6. Various portents and beasts | 12:1–14:20 |
| a) The woman and the dragon | 12:1–17 |
| b) Two beasts | 13:1–18 |
| c) The lamb, 144,000 redeemed and harvesting the earth | 14:1–20 |

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| 7. The seven bowls | 15:1–16:21 |
| 8. The judgement of Babylon the great prostitute | 17:1–19:4 |
| 9. The triumph of the lamb | 19:5–20:15 |
| a) Hallelujah | 19:6–10 |
| b) The rider on a white horse | 19:11–21 |
| c) The 1,000 years | 20:1–10 |
| d) Judgement of the dead | 20:11–15 |
| 10. New heavens and new earth | 21:1–22:21 |