

**Liturgical**  
**Introductions**  
**to**  
**Scripture**

**Brief introductions**  
**to each section, each book, and each chapter**  
**of the Bible for use in the *lectio continua***  
**public reading of Scripture**



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## Preface

Might it possibly be the case that some ministers fail to read Scripture in public worship because they feel inadequately acquainted with the text? Might it also be the case that the effectiveness of the public reading of Scripture might be enhanced by succinct introductions to the chapters to be read? Behind the following work is the hunch that both of these questions ought to be answered in the affirmative. It is to promote more Scripture reading in worship services that it is offered.

My ideal is a simple single sentence introduction to a chapter in the Bible. It has proven to be difficult to achieve this ideal, but it has been my goal. Too much introduction takes up too much time, and often fails to illuminate the listener. Simplicity and brevity are best. This is a work in progress. I would appreciate input from you, particularly if you have sources that have a particular genius for brief, succinct, context-establishing and content-summarizing introductions.



## Guidelines

The following guidelines are offered to help those implementing *lectio continua* Scripture reading in their churches. Consider the following.

1. *Read a chapter of each Testament in each service*, as recommended by the *Westminster Directory for the Public Worship of God*. By this we mean read not *slavishly* but *roughly* a chapter. Some chapters are long and need to be broken up into several pieces. Other sections of Scripture are not well-suited to the public reading, and so may need to be skipped over. In other words, the reading should be of *suitable* length. But the basic guideline should be a chapter per Testament per service.

2. *Read the Testament not being preached*. This guideline is proposed as a way of maintaining biblical balance. If the Gospel of Matthew is being preached in the morning service, then read Old Testament books along with the text from Matthew being preached. If the books of Samuel and Kings are being preached in the evening, then read a gospel, Acts, or an epistle alongside of the Samuel/Kings text being preached.

3. *Read passages that are accessible to the congregation*. It would probably prove unwise to begin the implementation of a program of *lectio continua* readings in the book of Leviticus. It can be done, but it is not recommended. Start with the Gospels, Acts, Psalms, Epistles, Proverbs, or an Old Testament narrative.

4. *Consistent with this, skip over (with descriptive comments) exceptionally remote or difficult texts*. Passages such as Exodus 25-31 (describing the Tabernacle and its furnishings, Joshua 15-21 (outlining the distribution of the Promised Land to the 12 Tribes), 1 Chronicles 1-9 (genealogies), Nehemiah 3 (describing the placement of workers on the walls of Jerusalem) ordinarily are best handled with a summary comment while transitioning to the next text to be read.

5. *Vary scriptural types.* It would probably be unwise to plow through one Minor Prophet after another, or straight through Old Testament narrative from Genesis to Nehemiah. Instead, vary the diet. Move from gospel to Old Testament narrative to epistle to Old Testament poetry to Acts to Old Testament wisdom and so on.

6. *Provide brief introductions to books and chapters.* By “brief” we mean normally a few sentences lasting 15-30 seconds. A few comments setting the stage of the text to be read or anticipating a difficulty in the text can do much to enhance the spiritual profitability of the reading. The following introductions have been written to provide assistance formulating these introductions.

7. *Read slowly, clearly and with nuance.* J. C. Ryle credited the reading of Scripture in the context of worship as being instrumental in his own conversion. The text was Ephesians 2:8, described by J. I. Packer as skillfully read in church “with significant pauses, thus achieving great emphasis” (J. I. Packer, *Faithfulness and Holiness: The Witness of J. C. Ryle* [Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2002], p. 27). Scripture may be read with more or less skill. Our final concern is that care be taken to read the Scripture well. The reading should not be rushed. Neither should the reading drag. The text to be read should be studied carefully enough that it can be read with comprehension and nuance, enhancing the understanding of the congregation. There is a direct relationship between the skill with which Scripture is read and the value of that reading for the listeners. Edification, after all, is the goal at which we are aiming. Substantial portions of Scripture should be read in the assemblies of God’s people because this is what God required of them in Bible times, what was practiced by the Patristic church and Reformation-era Reformed churches, and above all, because the reading of Scripture edifies the people of God.

## **Introduction to the Bible**

The Bible consists of 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, and is an infallible role of faith and practice. The Old Testament may be divided into five sections:

- The Law (Genesis – Deuteronomy)
- The Histories (Joshua – Esther)
- Wisdom (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)
- Hebrew Poetry (Psalms & Song of Solomon)
- Prophets (Isaiah – Malachi)

The New Testament may be divided into three sections:

- The Gospels (Matthew – John)
- Acts
- Epistles (Romans – Revelation)

Written over a period of a thousand years, with dozens of writers, writing on three continents, these 66 books nevertheless form a coherent whole, teaching a unified message of God's grace to humanity in Jesus Christ.



## **Introduction to the Pentateuch**

Genesis is the first of the five books of Moses, commonly called the Law, Torah, or Pentateuch (from the Greek *pentateuchos*, meaning “five volume [book]”). The tradition of Mosaic authorship is ancient. Moses is referred to as the author of the Pentateuch by Old Testament authors (Nehemiah 8:1; 13:1; 2 Chronicles 25:4), by Jesus (John 5:46), and by Luke (24:27). He is identified within the Pentateuch as the author of particular sections (e.g. Exodus 24:3-7 and Deuteronomy).



## Genesis

### Author

Though Genesis itself is anonymous, Moses should be understood to be its primary author.

### Date and Occasion

Genesis was written some time in the fifteenth century B.C., though some place-names and grammar show later editing. Its title is taken from the Greek title *genesis*, meaning “origin.” It was written as part of the five-book Pentateuch to explain the origins and history of God’s covenant people and their institutions (e.g. Sabbath [2:1-4] and circumcision [17:9-14]).

### Message

Genesis traces the history of humanity from creation to the fall to the flood as a backdrop to the election of Abraham in chapter 12. The rest of Genesis is about Abraham and his descendants from Isaac, to Jacob, to Joseph, to Israel’s sojourn in Egypt. Indeed, the rest of the Bible is about Abraham’s family, chosen from out of the world in order to be a blessing to the world, supremely through his Seed, Jesus the Christ (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8,29).

### Genesis 1

The six days of creation.

### Genesis 2

The seventh day of creation, the creation of Adam and Eve in detail, and the institution of marriage.

### Genesis 3

The fall of man and the promise of a Savior.

### Genesis 4

Cain, the ungodly offspring of Adam and Eve, murders Abel, the godly offspring (verses 1-16); the escalation of evil from Cain to Lamech, and the reestablishment of the godly line through Seth (verses 17-25).

## **Genesis 5**

Genesis 5 records genealogy of Adam through Seth to Noah. It begins

*<sup>1</sup> This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named Man when they were created. <sup>3</sup> When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*

It includes Enoch, who along with Elijah are the only Old Testament saints not to experience death:

*<sup>22</sup> Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.*

## **Genesis 6**

Genesis 6 explains the conditions that make necessary the flood, and the covenant through which Noah will be saved.

## **Genesis 7**

Noah, the ark, and the flood.

## **Genesis 8**

The flood recedes, and by divine promise is never to be repeated.

## **Genesis 9**

God announces the blessings of His covenant upon Noah, his descendants, and all creation.

## **Genesis 10, 11**

Genesis 10 records the descendants of Noah as they multiply and father nations. Genesis 11: the tower of Babel and the scattering of the nations (read Genesis 11:1-11). The

descendants of Noah through the godly line of Shem, father of the Semites, leading to Abraham, are revealed in verses 12-32 (read 11:24-32).

### **Genesis 12**

Chapter 12 marks the great divide in the book of Genesis, and indeed the whole Bible. Humanity as a whole, the subject of chapters 1-11, recedes into the background as Abram and his descendants come into focus, where they remain the center of attention until the last chapter of the Book of Revelation. Yet they are chosen and blessed, ultimately, that they might be a blessing to “all the families of the earth” (verse 3).

### **Genesis 13**

Abram settles in Canaan, the land of promise, and his nephew Lot in the Jordan Valley near Sodom.

### **Genesis 14**

Abram rescues Lot from the King of Elam and encounters Melchizedek, King of Salem.

### **Genesis 15**

God promises Abram a son, countless descendants and the land of Canaan, and confirms His promise with a covenant.

### **Genesis 16**

Ishmael is born through Sarai’s maid Hagar.

### **Genesis 17**

Circumcision is given as a sign of God’s covenant with Abram, now Abraham, and the birth of a son through Sarai, now Sarah, is promised.

### **Genesis 18**

Abraham is promised a son through Sarah within the year (verses 10-15); Abraham intercedes on behalf of doomed Sodom (verses 16-33).

**Genesis 19**

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 1-29) and Lot's shame (verses 30-38).

**Genesis 20**

Abraham's cowardly deception.

**Genesis 21**

The birth of Isaac and the departure of Ishmael (verses 1-21); Abraham's covenant with Abimelech (verses 22-34).

**Genesis 22**

Abraham tested through the offering of Isaac, a type of Christ.

**Genesis 23**

The death and burial of Sarah.

**Genesis 24:1-27**

Abraham seeks a bride for Isaac.

**Genesis 24:28-67**

Rebekah becomes Isaac's wife.

**Genesis 25**

The death of Abraham and the births of Jacob and Esau (verses 1-26). Esau despises his birthright (verses 27-34).

**Genesis 26:1-17**

Isaac settles amongst the Philistines.

**Genesis 26:18-35**

Isaac's covenant with Abimelech.

**Genesis 27:1-29**

Rebekah and Jacob conspire to steal Isaac's blessing of Esau, the firstborn.

**Genesis 27:30-46**

Isaac and Esau learn of Jacob's deception.

## **Genesis 28**

Jacob sent to Mesopotamia to find a wife among the daughters of Laban, brother of his mother Rebekah.

## **Genesis 29**

Jacob labors seven years for Rachel but is deceived by Laban (verses 1-30); the birth of Jacob's first four sons through Leah (verses 31-35).

## **Genesis 30:1-24**

The births of the sons of Laban.

## **Genesis 30:25-43**

Jacob prospers in the service of Laban.

## **Genesis 31:1-21**

Jacob and his household flee Laban.

## **Genesis 31:22-55**

Laban and his men overtake Jacob; then make a covenant at Mizpah agreeing not to harm each other.

## **Genesis 32**

Jacob fears his encounter with Esau, and wrestles with an angel.

## **Genesis 33**

The reunion of Jacob and Esau.

## **Genesis 34**

The defilement of Dinah, daughter of Jacob, and the treachery of his sons.

## **Genesis 35**

Jacob returns to Bethel, where he had earlier dreamed of the angels ascending and descending (28:10-22), where Abraham before him had previously worshiped (12:8; 13:3,4), and God reaffirms the promises of the covenant (verses 1-15); the deaths of Rachel and Isaac and the birth of Benjamin (verses 16-29).

**Genesis 36-37:17**

Chapter 36 records the descendants of Esau (do not read).

Chapter 37: Joseph's dreams and his brother's hostility.

**Genesis 37:18-38**

Joseph is sold by his brothers into slavery and taken to Egypt.

**Genesis 38**

The unrighteousness of Judah is exposed.

**Genesis 39**

Joseph in Potiphar's household and in prison.

**Genesis 40**

Joseph interprets the dreams of his fellow prisoners, Pharaoh's cupbearer and his chief baker.

**Genesis 41:1-37**

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream.

**Genesis 41:38-57**

Joseph's wisdom is rewarded by Pharaoh: he is made a ruler in Egypt.

**Genesis 42:1-24**

The sons of Jacob encounter their brother Joseph in Egypt.

**Genesis 42:25-38**

Simeon is left behind as a hostage in Egypt as his brothers report the bad news to Jacob.

**Genesis 43**

Joseph's brothers return to him in Egypt with their youngest brother Benjamin.

**Genesis 44**

Judah pleads for mercy from Joseph on behalf of Jacob his father and his youngest brother Benjamin.

## **Genesis 45**

Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers.

## **Genesis 46**

Jacob and his family travel to Egypt (read verses 1-7). Verses 8-23 list the descendants of Jacob who accompany him. We pick up the summary in 26 (read verses 26-34).

## **Genesis 47**

Israel settles in the land of Goshen as Joseph manages Egypt's resources in time of famine.

## **Genesis 48**

Jacob blesses Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

## **Genesis 49**

Jacob's prophetic blessing of his sons (verses 1-27) and his death (verses 28-32).

## **Genesis 50**

Jacob's burial in the land of Canaan and Joseph's confidence in the sovereign purposes of God.



## **Exodus**

### **Author**

This second “book of Moses” (Mark 12:26) is also believed (with Genesis, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy) to have been written by Moses. Its name, “Exodus,” is derived from the Greek word exodus, from which we get our word “exit,” and refers to the central event of its narrative, the departure of Israel from Egypt.

### **Date and Occasion**

It was written sometime between the exodus event itself (c. 1450-1440 B.C.) and the death of Moses (c.1406 B.C.). It was written to record for posterity the central redemptive event of the Old Testament, as God delivered His covenant people from bondage in Egypt.

### **Message**

Exodus demonstrates that the God of the Bible is a God of redemption, who remembers His covenant promises made to Abraham and his descendants, now a multitude in Egypt, and saves them. A redeemed people are called to be a holy people, so they are placed under the obligation to obey His law, as the children of Israel travel to Mt. Sinai, where they arrive in chapter 19 and remain through the end of Leviticus. The aim of it all is that a holy God should dwell among a holy people. Moses’ role as mediator, deliverer, shepherd of his people, intercessor and lawgiver, all point to Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant (Deuteronomy 18:15).

### **Exodus 1**

Nearly 500 years after the death of Joseph, Israel suffers in bondage under Pharaoh’s oppressive rule (perhaps Ahmosis I [1570-1546 B.C.]).

### **Exodus 2**

The birth of Moses, his flight to Midian in the Sinai Peninsula, and God remembers His covenant.

### **Exodus 3**

The burning bush and the call of Moses.

### **Exodus 4**

Moses returns to Egypt.

### **Exodus 5**

Moses appears before Pharaoh, probably Thutmose III (1504-1450 B.C.), and demands “Let my people go.”

### **Exodus 6**

Read 6:1-13; 6:26-29

God pledges to honor His covenant promises to the patriarchs and deliver Israel from bondage (read 6:1-13). Following the genealogy of verses 14-25 the narrative continues in verse 26 (read 6:26-29).

### **Exodus 7**

God promises deliverance for Israel through signs and wonders and great acts of judgment (verses 1-13). The first plague: the waters of the Nile turn to blood (verses 14-25).

### **Exodus 8**

The second, third and fourth plagues fall upon Egypt: frogs, gnats, and flies.

### **Exodus 9**

The fifth, sixth, and seventh plagues: livestock destroyed, boils, hail.

### **Exodus 10**

The eighth and ninth plagues are visited upon Egypt: locusts and darkness.

### **Exodus 11–12:20**

The tenth and final plague, death of Egypt’s firstborn, is threatened and Passover is instituted.

### **Exodus 12:21-50**

The death angel destroys Egypt's firstborn, and the exodus from Egypt begins.

### **Exodus 13**

The feast of unleavened bread instituted and the consecration of the firstborn (verses 1-16); the LORD leads the children of Israel out by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

### **Exodus 14**

The crossing of the Red Sea.

### **Exodus 15**

The victory "song of Moses" (verses 1-21); the journey continues to Shur, Marah, and Elim (verses 22-27).

### **Exodus 16**

The LORD provides the children of Israel manna from heaven, a type of Christ, who is the bread of life (John 6:25-58).

### **Exodus 17**

The LORD provides water through the striking of a rock upon which God stands with a rod of judgment. "The rock was Christ," says the Apostle Paul, the smitten God who provides that which saves His people (1 Corinthians 10:14).

### **Exodus 18**

Moses listens to the counsel of his father-in-law Jethro.

### **Exodus 19**

The children of Israel arrive at Mt. Sinai and prepare to meet with God.

### **Exodus 20**

From atop Mt. Sinai God delivers His law to Moses.

### **Exodus 21B23**

Various moral and ceremonial laws are given from Mt. Sinai in chapters 21-23. Beginning at 23:20 God promises conquest of

the land and prosperity if the children of Israel will obey His voice (read 23:20-33).

### **Exodus 24**

The children of Israel affirm their covenant with God.

### **Exodus 25B31**

Read 31:1-18

Still atop Mt. Sinai directions are given to Moses for the furnishings of the tabernacle: the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, the golden lampstand, the curtains of linen, the curtains of goats hair, the veil and screen, the bronze altar, the court of the tabernacle, and the garments of the priests.

Directions are also given for the consecration of the priests and the offering of sacrifices, the altar of incense, the anointing oil, and the incense. We pick up the narrative in chapter 31 with the appointment of skilled craftsmen and the consecration of the Sabbath.

### **Exodus 32:1-18**

The “Golden Calf” and Moses’ intercession.

### **Exodus 32:19-35**

Moses shatters the tablets of the law upon observing the idolatry of the children of Israel with the “Golden Calf.”

### **Exodus 33**

Israel is commanded to leave Sinai without God’s gracious presence. Moses’ intercession restores fellowship with God.

### **Exodus 34**

The covenant, disrupted through the incident of the “golden calf,” is restored, as Moses is given a glimpse of “the backsides” of God (KJV).

### **Exodus 35B40**

Read 39:42–40:38

While chapters 25-31 gave instructions for the tabernacle chapters 35-39 describe its actual construction, though in a different order: contributors, the skilled workers, the ark of the covenant, the table, the lampstand, the altars of incense and burnt offerings, the bronze basin, the court, the priestly garments.

We join the narrative at 39:42, as the tabernacle is erected according to the LORD's command, approximately 9 months after the arrival at Sinai, and the glory of the LORD fills the tabernacle.



## Leviticus

### Author

As is the case with the rest of the Pentateuch, Moses is the author. Its name is the Latin form of the Greek title, “about Levis.”

### Date & Occasion

Leviticus picks up where Exodus leaves off. The children of Israel are at Mt. Sinai, and God is continuing to reveal His “statutes and ordinances and laws” to Moses (1:1; 7:37,38; 26:46; 27:34).

### Message

Though probably the most challenging book of the Old Testament for modern readers, its concepts of sin, sacrifice, and atonement are foundational for the rest of the Bible, particularly for the New Testament interpretation of the death of Christ. The central message of Leviticus is “you shall therefore be holy; for I am holy” (11:45). It is primarily concerned with the sacrifices which must be offered for atonement to be made if a holy God is to dwell with a sinful people.

### Leviticus 1–7

Read 1:1-14; 7:37,38

Chapters 1–7 record directions for the various offerings: burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt.

### Leviticus 8

The consecration as priests of Aaron and his sons.

### Leviticus 9

The LORD accepts Aaron’s first sacrifices.

### Leviticus 10

The unauthorized ministrations of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, are rejected (verses 1-11), and his remaining sons Eleazar and Ithamar falter as well (verses 12-20).

## **Leviticus 11–16**

Read 16:1-34

Chapters 11–15 distinguish between what is “clean,” and therefore fit for God’s presence, and what is “unclean,” typically what is unhealthy and abnormal and therefore unfit for God’s presence: contact with certain animals, various skin diseases, and the aftermath of bodily emissions. Chapter 16 describes the priestly rituals for the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): the high priest, the scape goat, the sacrificial offerings, all of which anticipate the work of Christ (Hebrews 9:6-28; 13:11-13).

## **Leviticus 17, 18**

Read 18:1-30

The place of sacrifice is restricted to the tent of meeting and the eating of blood is prohibited.

*‘For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’ (17:11)*

Unlawful moral and religious practices are outlined.

## **Leviticus 19**

The people of God are to be holy as God is, and love their neighbors.

## **Leviticus 20**

Read verses 22-27

Civil and ecclesiastical penalties are given for many of the moral and religious offenses identified in chapter 18, concluding in verses 22-27 with a further call to holiness.

## **Leviticus 21–24**

Read 24:10-23

Ritual requirements touching ceremonial cleanliness for priests, rules of sacrifice, the observance of the various annual feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks, Trumpets,

Atonement, and Booths), the maintenance of tabernacle lamps and bread, and, beginning at 24:10, the penalty for blasphemy and the law of vengeance, the *lex talionis*.

**Leviticus 25**  
Read 25:1-22

The Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee. The chapter closes with rules concerning property, lending money, and slavery.

**Leviticus 26:1-39**

The promise of blessing for obedience (verses 3-13) and warnings of curses for disobedience (verses 14-39).

**Leviticus 26:40–27:34**

Read 26:40-46

The promise of forgiveness even in the context of judgment if the people of God repent. Chapter 27 provides rules for vows and tithes, followed by this concluding summary:

*These are the commandments which the Lord  
commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.  
(27:34)*



### **Author**

The fourth “book of Moses,” or the book of the law, the Torah, like the preceding three, was written by Moses (e.g. 33:2). Its name is taken from its title in the LXX, *arithmoi* or Numbers, though its Hebrew title, more aptly, is “in the wilderness.”

### **Date & Occasion**

Written some time in the 40 years before Moses’ death in about 1406 B.C., Numbers picks up where Leviticus left off, with the people of Israel encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai. God’s revelation of His law to Moses is now complete and they are about to decamp and continue their journey to the promised land.

### **Message**

Numbers tells the story of the failure of the Exodus generation to believe God and records the consequent 40 years of wilderness wandering. Commenting directly on the story of Numbers, the Apostle Paul says:

*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)*

The lesson of Numbers is this, he says:

*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)*

Both the “goodness” of God in preserving His people and His “sovereignty” in judging a whole generation are on clear display.

## **Numbers 1–6**

Read 1:1-4; 6:22-27

Having completed the tabernacle, further steps are taken to prepare the people of God for their journey and finally to occupy the Promised Land. (Read 1:1-4)

A census of the tribes is taken (chapter 1), the order of encampment and march outlined (chapter 2), the Levites are numbered and their duties described (chapters 3,4), the camp protected from defilement (5), and the Nazirite vow described. We conclude with the Aaronic benediction. (Read 6:22-27)

## **Numbers 7–10**

Read 9:15–10:13; 10:29-36.

Preparations for the journey from Mt. Sinai to the Promised Land continue as offerings for the tabernacle are received (chapter 7), the Levites are consecrated (chapter 8), Passover is celebrated (chapter 9), and the means by which God would guide His people are described: supernaturally by cloud, by command through Moses announced by trumpet. Finally they depart.

## **Numbers 11**

As the children of Israel begin their journey from Mt. Sinai to the Promised Land, the people complain, Moses intercedes, and God provides.

## **Numbers 12**

Moses' sister, Miriam, and his brother, Aaron, challenge his authority.

## **Numbers 13**

Read 13:1-3; 13:17-33

Leaders from each tribe are sent to spy out the land of Canaan and report back. Their names are given in verses 4-16. We rejoin the narrative in verse 17.

### **Numbers 14:1-19**

The people of Israel listen to the bad report of the spies returning from Canaan and they rebel.

### **Numbers 14:20-45**

God judges the rebellion and unbelief of the people of Israel with 40 years of wilderness wandering, excluding from the Promised Land the exodus generation.

### **Numbers 15–16:24**

Read 16:1-25

Amidst Israel's failures, chapter 15 affirms that the nation will yet inhabit the Promised Land, while chapter 16 records the rebellion of Korah and the Kohathites.

### **Numbers 16:25-50**

God judges the rebellious followers of the Korah as the ground opens and swallows the rebels alive.

### **Numbers 17**

The blooming of Aaron's staff identifies him and his descendants as the true priests of God.

### **Numbers 18–20**

Read 20:1-29

The duties of priests and Levites and the laws of purification are given in chapters 18 and 19. We pick up the narrative in chapter 20, nearly 40 years after the punishment inflicted in chapter 14. As the period of wandering is now coming to an end, we are told of the deaths of Miriam and Aaron, and of the punishment of Moses.

### **Numbers 21**

As the children of Israel approach the Promised Land, they defeat a series of Canaanite kings, and God provides a bronze serpent, a type of Christ, as a way of delivering them from His judgments (cf. John 3:14-16).

## **Numbers 22**

As the children of Israel arrive at the plains of Moab, 25 miles northeast of Jerusalem and on the other side of the Jordan River, King Balak of Moab hires Balaam, a famous sorcerer, to curse Israel.

## **Numbers 23**

The sorcerer Balaam is taken to the mountains surrounding the Israelite encampment on the plains of Moab, where he twice blesses, rather than curses, the children of Israel.

## **Numbers 24**

The sorcerer, Balaam, overlooking the Israelite encampment on the plains of Moab, 25 miles northeast of Jerusalem, blesses the children of Israel a third and fourth time, to the dismay of Balak, King of Moab.

## **Numbers 25**

The Moabites and the Midianites lure Israel into idolatry with Baal of Peor, and the zeal of Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, is demonstrated.

## **Numbers 26–27**

Read chapter 27

Preparations to enter the Promised Land are undertaken: a second census is recorded in chapter 26 (following that of 40 years earlier recorded in chapter 1), and in chapter 27 a question of inheritance is answered and Moses' successor is named.

## **Numbers 28–31**

Read 31:1-12.

Previously given instruction regarding daily, weekly, monthly, and annual sacrifices (feasts) is summarized in chapters 28 and 29, and instruction on vows (previously given in Leviticus 27) is expanded in chapter 30. Vengeance is taken on the Midianites in chapter 31.

## **Numbers 32**

Controversy arises surrounding the determination of the tribes of Reuben and Gad to settle in Gilead, on the other side of the Jordan.

## **Numbers 33–36**

Read 33:1-4, 50-56; 36:13

Chapter 33 recounts the various stages of Israel's exodus from Egypt. (Read 33:1-4; 50-56)

Chapter 34 describes the boundaries of the 12 tribes in the Promised Land and lists the tribal chiefs. Chapter 35 details the cities for the Levites and the cities of refuge. Chapter 36 records further rules for female heirs, adding to those of 27:1-11.

Finally we read the concluding verse of Numbers. (Read 36:13)



## Deuteronomy

### Author

Moses is identified in Deuteronomy itself as the author, written sometime shortly before his death in 1406 B.C.

### Date & Occasion

Having journeyed from Egypt to Mt. Sinai in *Exodus*; remained at Mt. Sinai in *Leviticus* as the law of God continued to be given; having wandered in the wilderness for 40 years in *Numbers*; and having successfully concluded the conquest of the Transjordan region (also in *Numbers*); the children of Israel are now on the edge of the Jordan River, ready to cross over and possess the Promised Land. Moses rehearses Israel's recent history and gives the Law a second time, hence the name, *Deuteronomy*, from the LXX *Deuteromion*, Greek for "Second Law."

### Message

Deuteronomy is quoted over 50 times in the New Testament, a number exceeded only by the Psalms and Isaiah. Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address to Israel, combining historical review with exhortation from the Law. It also anticipates Christ as the coming prophet whose voice, Moses exhorts, must be heard (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

### Deuteronomy 1:1-25

Moses reviews Israel's recent history in chapters 1-4. In chapter 1 he outlines Israel's 150-mile journey from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea from which the spies were sent out, a mere 100 miles south of Jerusalem's future site.

### Deuteronomy 1:26-46

Moses continues his review of Israel's recent history from its refusal to possess the land to its 40-year banishment in the wilderness.

## **Deuteronomy 2**

Moses continues his review of Israel's recent past from the 38 years in the wilderness to the beginning of the two-year military campaign to clear out the southern Transjordan region.

## **Deuteronomy 3**

Moses continues his overview of Israel's recent past, in chapter 4 reviewing the conquest of the northern Transjordan region and the exclusion of Moses from the Promised Land.

## **Deuteronomy 4:1-24**

Moses exhorts Israel to keep God's commandments and warns the nation to flee idolatry.

## **Deuteronomy 4:25-49**

Moses warns of God's judgment upon idolatry and urges obedience to God's commandments.

## **Deuteronomy 5**

Having completed his review of Israel's recent history from Mt. Sinai to its present station on the verge of crossing the Jordan and entering into the Promised Land, Moses now expounds the way of life for the community in covenant with God, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

## **Deuteronomy 6**

The great *confession*, the *Shema*, named for the first Hebrew word in the affirmation of faith, "*Hear*, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one," and the great *commandment*, to love God.

## **Deuteronomy 7**

God commands a war of annihilation against the Canaanites and promises a faithful Israel both victory and prosperity.

## **Deuteronomy 8**

Moses urges Israel to *keep* God's commandments, to *remember* His provision during the 40 years in the wilderness, and *not forget* in the coming prosperity that they are sure to enjoy in the

fruitful Land of Promise, that God gives His people the power to get wealth.

### **Deuteronomy 9**

Israel will not possess the land because it is more righteous than those whom they will drive out, but because of the Canaanites wickedness. Moses reminds the people of Israel of their stubborn unbelief and provocation in the exodus from Egypt.

### **Deuteronomy 10**

Moses urges Israel to fear, obey, love, and serve the LORD.

### **Deuteronomy 11**

Moses promises the blessing of God in the Land of Promise if Israel will fear, obey, love and serve the LORD.

### **Deuteronomy 12**

Read 12:1-14; 12:29-32

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy begins a new section which extends to the end of chapter 26, in which Moses shifts from a general call to obedience and faithfulness to specific rules and regulations.

Chapter 12 restricts sacrificial offenses to the central (read 12:1-14). Verses 15-28 give rules about eating meat not devoted to God; verses 29-32 warn against idolatry (read 12:29-32).

### **Deuteronomy 13**

Warnings against apostasy.

### **Deuteronomy 14**

Read 12:22-29

Rules regarding clean and unclean animals are provided in verses 1-21, and rules regarding tithes beginning in verse 22.

## **Deuteronomy 15**

The Sabbatical year and forgiveness of debts (verses 1-11); the release of Hebrew slaves after six years of servitude (verses 12-23).

## **Deuteronomy 16:1-17**

Rules regarding the three pilgrimage feasts: Passover, Weeks, and Booths.

## **Deuteronomy 16:18–17:20**

Laws regarding the execution of justice by judges, priests, and kings.

## **Deuteronomy 18**

Provision for Levitical priests and the promise of a coming prophet like Moses, ultimately fulfilled in Christ (Acts 3:22-26).

## **Deuteronomy 19–20**

Read 19:15–20:19

Deuteronomy 19–20 records laws concerning cities of refuge, witnesses, and warfare. We pick up the narrative at verse 15.

## **Deuteronomy 21–25**

Read 24:1–25:4

Chapters 21–24 record various laws, moral, ceremonial, and civil.

## **Deuteronomy 26**

Directions concerning the offering of first fruits and tithes.

## **Deuteronomy 27**

Chapter 27 begins a third section, even a third address in this book of farewells, which extends through chapter 30. Moses commands that a covenant renewal ceremony be held when Israel crosses the Jordan River. The law was to be published on plastered stones, half of the people were to stand on Mt. Ebal and half on Mt. Gerizim, as the blessings and curses of the law were to be announced.

### **Deuteronomy 28:1-24**

Moses' description of the ceremony of covenant renewal to be conducted once the Jordan River is crossed continues. Chapter 27 described a "liturgy" of curses, chapter 28 a liturgy of blessings in verses 1-14, followed by further curses in verses 15-68.

### **Deuteronomy 28:25-68**

Read 28:25-51; 58-68

Moses description of the curses to be pronounced at the ceremony of covenant renewal to be conducted once the Jordan River is crossed continues.

### **Deuteronomy 29**

Moses calls for a renewal of the Sinai covenant.

### **Deuteronomy 30**

Moses describes the path of restoration when the people of God are judged for their sin, and urges them to choose life.

### **Deuteronomy 31**

Chapter 31 marks the beginning of the final section of Deuteronomy, in which Moses provides for the transition of authority after his death.

### **Deuteronomy 32:1-27**

The Song of Moses, contrasting the mighty acts of God in the Exodus with Israel's waywardness, is given as a testimony against future unbelief and faithlessness.

### **Deuteronomy 32:28-52**

The conclusion of the Song of Moses in which God promises vengeance upon His wayward people.

### **Deuteronomy 33**

The final blessing of Moses upon the tribes of Israel.

## **Deuteronomy 34**

Moses views the Promised land from atop Mt. Pisgah, and dies in the land of Moab. (Read 34:1-12.) No prophet arose like Moses until Jesus the Messiah, who with even greater signs and wonders delivered His people from an even greater bondage (Matthew 4:23-25; Acts 22; 3:22-26).

## **Introduction to Historical Books**

Joshua is the first of a collection of books known as the “historical books,” which extends from Joshua to Esther, and covers the history of Israel from the conquest of Canaan to the return from exile in Babylon. At the same time Joshua also picks up where Deuteronomy left off, and so the “historical books” can be seen as continuing the story of the Pentateuch which began with creation, and continued from Noah to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and the sojourn in Egypt, Moses and the exodus, and now records the conquest of the land of promise.



## **Joshua**

### **Author**

The author of Joshua is unknown, though according to one tradition Joshua himself is both the main character and author of the book that bears his name.

### **Date & Occasion**

There are a number of theories about when Joshua was written. Internal evidence, as well as its relation to Deuteronomy which precedes it and Judges which follows it, indicates a date just prior to Joshua's death (around 1400 B.C.) and before Saul (c. 1050 B.C.). It was written to record the mighty acts of God in the conquest of the Promised Land, as well as to challenge Israel to consolidate its victory over the Canaanites.

### **Message**

The main message of Joshua is the fulfillment of the promise of God to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12:7) despite the faithlessness of the generation that fell in the wilderness (Numbers 13,14; Deuteronomy 1:26-36). Joshua, as the leader of the conquest of Israel's enemies, prefigures the work of Christ who likewise "conquers all His and our enemies" (Shorter Catechism #26).

### **Joshua 1**

God commissions Joshua to lead the people of God across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.

### **Joshua 2**

Rahab the harlot hides the spies sent by Joshua to investigate Jericho.

### **Joshua 3**

Joshua leads Israel across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land.

## **Joshua 4**

Israel completes the crossing of the Jordan River and memorializes the event with twelve stones taken from the midst of the Jordan.

## **Joshua 5**

As Israel begins new life in the land of promise the sacraments are administered: the new generation of men are initiated into the covenant through circumcision, and Passover, the covenant meal celebrating redemption, is celebrated.

## **Joshua 6**

The fall of Jericho marks the beginning of Israel's wars of annihilation. Israel serves as God's agent of judgment on a Canaanite people whose evil is so great that God can no longer tolerate their continued existence (cf. Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24-27; Deuteronomy 9:4,5; Revelation 19:1).

## **Joshua 7**

Israel's victory at Jericho is followed by defeat at Ai brought on by the sin of Achan.

## **Joshua 8**

Defeat is followed by victory, as Ai falls to Israel. The covenant is renewed at Mt. Ebal where Abraham built an altar upon hearing the original covenant promise (Genesis 12:1-7).

## **Joshua 9**

The Gibeonites deceive Israel so are spared from destruction.

## **Joshua 10:1-21**

Five kings of southern Canaan join forces in opposition to Israel and with the help of divine intervention are overthrown.

## **Joshua 10:22-43**

The annihilation of the cities of southern Canaan is completed, as God through Israel purges the land of evil so great that He could no longer tolerate its continued existence.

## **Joshua 11**

Having completed the conquest of southern Canaan, Joshua moves his armies northward to meet an alliance of northern Canaanite kings.

## **Joshua 12–14**

Read 14:6-15

Chapter 12 summarizes Israel's conquests under Moses (verses 1-6) and Joshua (verses 7-24) and the complete fulfillment of the promises of God (11:23; cf. 21:45). Chapter 13:1-7, however, describes the incompleteness of the actual possession of the land and the enemies which remained to be subdued. Chapters 13:8–21:45 describe the distribution of the land of Canaan to the 12 tribes. We will read of Caleb's request in chapter 14.

## **Joshua 15–18**

Read 17:12–18:10

Chapters 15-17 describe the distribution of the land of Canaan to Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh. The latter, however, voice a complaint and Joshua urges faithful obedience.

## **Joshua 19–22:9**

Read 21:43–22:9

The distribution of the land to the remaining six tribes is completed in chapter 19, cities of refuge are established in chapter 20, cities and pasturelands are allocated to the tribe of Levi in chapter 21 and the tribes settling east of the Jordan return to their land.

## **Joshua 22:10-34**

The eastern tribe's altar of witness is misunderstood and the zeal of Joshua's generation of Israelites is displayed.

## **Joshua 23**

Joshua's final charge to Israel's leaders.

## **Joshua 24**

Israel returns to Schechem, where God first promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, and reaffirms the covenant with the LORD God of Israel.

### **Author**

The author of Judges is unknown. The title “Judges” refers to the 12 leaders God raised up to lead Israel. It is somewhat misleading in that these leaders were not “judges” in a strictly judicial sense, but typically are portrayed exercising military and political authority.

### **Date & Occasion**

The date of composition is also unknown, though it covers the period from right after Joshua and the conquest of the Canaan to right before Samuel and the anointing of Saul as Israel’s first king. That is it covers a period of about 350 years from about 1400 B.C. to about 1050 B.C.

### **Message**

Judges contrasts sharply with Joshua. Whereas Joshua focuses on the successful conquest of Canaan, Judges reveals the failure of Israel to occupy and control Canaan. Conflict with the inhabitants, be they Moabites, Midianites, Amorites, or Philistines are constant. Whereas Joshua’s generation was faithful, Judges reveals what happens when a generation arises that “(does) not know the LORD or the work that He had done for Israel” (2:10). Judges reveals a distressing pattern: the people of God enjoy peace and prosperity, they fall into sin and idolatry, God sends oppressors, the people of God cry out for deliverance, God sends a Gideon or a Samson to deliver them. They enjoy again a period of peace and prosperity, and then fall into sin once more and the cycle repeats itself.

This failure to remain faithful points to the need of a king. Israel’s terrible sins occur, we are told, because “there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). While the situation will improve some under the monarchy, ultimately Judges points to the need of Messiah, the rule of King Jesus, to establish the people of God in righteousness and faithfulness.

## **Judges 1**

The continuing conquest of the land of Canaan as well as military failures after the death of Joshua.

## **Judges 2**

The pattern of the book of Judges explained: a new generation arises that doesn't "know the Lord," is faithless, is delivered over to plunderers, and for whom God raises up judges to deliver them.

## **Judges 3**

The "judgeships" of Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar.

## **Judges 4**

The judgeship of Deborah.

## **Judges 5**

The Song of Deborah and Barak celebrating their victory over the Canaanites.

## **Judges 6:1-24**

The call of Gideon.

## **Judges 6:25-40**

Gideon destroys the altar of Baal and requests the sign of the fleece.

## **Judges 7**

Gideon defeats Midian with 300 men.

## **Judges 8:1-21**

Gideon defeats Zebah and Zalmunna.

## **Judges 8:22-34**

Gideon and all Israel corrupted by his golden ephod.

## **Judges 9:1-25**

Abimelech, the son of Gideon (Jerubbaal) is made king by the leaders of Shechem through treachery.

**Judges 9:26-57**

Abimelech suppresses a rebellion in Shechem, burning its Tower, and is killed by a woman outside the tower of Thebez.

**Judges 10**

The judgeships of Tola & Jair and a new cycle of disobedience and oppression.

**Judges 11:1-13**

Jephthah the son of Gilead is sought to lead Israel.

**Judges 11:14-40**

Jephthah's defeat of the Ammonites and his foolish vow.

**Judges 12**

Jephthah's conflict with Ephraim and the judgeships of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

**Judges 13**

The birth of Samson.

**Judges 14**

Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman.

**Judges 15**

Samson defeats the Philistines and judges Israel for 20 years.

**Judges 16:1-17**

Samson is seduced and nagged by Delilah.

**Judges 16:18-31**

The death of Samson.

**Judges 17**

Micah of Ephraim makes an idol in the name of the Lord, ordains his son as a priest, and implicates a Levite in his apostasy.

### **Judges 18**

The Danites become involved in the apostasy of Micah of Ephraim by taking his idol and Levite.

### **Judges 19**

The religious and moral deterioration at a time when “there was no king in Israel” and “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” is illustrated. Israel’s moral decline as seen in the brutal murder and dismemberment of the Levite’s concubine.

### **Judges 20:1-23**

Israel determines to avenge the murder of the Levite’s concubine but fails in its first attempt.

### **Judges 20:24-48**

Israel avenges the murder of the Levite’s concubine on its third attempt, devastating the tribe of Benjamin.

### **Judges 21**

Israel’s moral deterioration when it had no king and “everyone did what was right in its own eyes” is illustrated in the use of murder & kidnapping to supply the need of wives for the sons of Benjamin.

## **Ruth**

### **Author**

The book of Ruth, named for its principle character, was written by an unknown author, though rabbinic tradition held that it was the prophet Samuel.

### **Date & Occasion**

Date and occasion of writing are similarly unknown and a number of alternatives have been suggested. A time earlier in the period of the monarchy may be the best theory. Its primary aim may be to show the redemptive purposes of God in establishing the Davidic line.

### **Message**

Set in the period of the judges, the grace of God is demonstrated in the salvation of the Moabites, Ruth and her redemption by her kinsman Boaz. The grace of God is further manifested in God's chosen King David, who is descended from Perez, the offspring of incest (4:12,18; Genesis 38:26), and Ruth, a foreigner, a Gentile. Ultimately Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is a Jew descended from Ruth and the Moabites (4:22; Matthew 1:5).

### **Ruth 1**

Ruth, a foreigner from Moab, insists upon leaving her native land in order to accompany her mother-in-law Naomi in her move back to Israel, determined to make Naomi's people and God her own.

### **Ruth 2**

Ruth meets a close relative of her mother-in-law Naomi, Boaz, who shows kindness to Ruth.

### **Ruth 3**

Ruth joins Boaz at the threshing floor where Boaz determines to redeem and marry her.

## **Ruth 4**

Boaz redeems and marries Ruth, who gives birth to Obed, grandfather of David, from whom would come the Messiah.

## 1 & 2 Samuel

### Author

The author(s) of 1 & 2 Samuel (they were originally one book) are not identified and are unknown. They derive their name from the chief character of the opening chapters, the last of the judges and the first of the prophets, Samuel.

### Date & Occasion

The date of writing is also uncertain. Sections of 1 & 2 Samuel may have been written at the time of the events narrated and only later put in final form, perhaps as late as the Babylonian captivity (after 587 B.C.). As for the dates of the events narrated, Samuel would have been born about 1100 B.C., David's reign over a united Israel about 1000 B.C., Solomon's reign about 960 B.C.

### Message

The Reformation Study Bible refers to 1 & 2 Samuel as "masterpieces of literature" (374). 1 Samuel focuses on Saul's rise to power and subsequent rejection. 2 Samuel is wholly taken up with David's reign as king.

The opening chapters (1–7) continue the theme of Judges as "everyone does what is right in his own eyes," despite Samuel's best efforts. The people demand a king (chapter 8), a requirement incompatible with God's kingship over Israel but one accommodated by a merciful God. Saul starts well, but proves to be a disappointment and is rejected by God, even as David rises from obscurity to prominence. David becomes God's ideal king, but even he is deeply flawed, pointing to a greater than David who is also a son of David who will rule both Israel and the nations in righteousness (Matthew 1:1ff).

### 1 Samuel 1

Hannah's tears are answered in the birth of Samuel, and her vow is honored in his dedication at the temple.

**1 Samuel 2:1-11**

Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prays her “song” of thanksgiving.

**1 Samuel 2:12-22**

God’s favor toward Samuel contrasted with God’s rejection of the house of Eli.

**1 Samuel 3**

The LORD reveals Himself to young Samuel, establishing him as a prophet in Israel.

**1 Samuel 4**

The ark of God is captured in battle, the priest Eli falls to his death, and his newborn grandson is named Ichabod.

**1 Samuel 5**

The ark of God humbles the Philistine god Dagon and afflicts the Philistines wherever it is moved.

**1 Samuel 6**

The Philistines return the Ark of God to Israel.

**1 Samuel 7**

The judgeship of the prophet Samuel, or, Samuel judges Israel.

**1 Samuel 8**

Israel demands a king, and through the prophet Samuel warns them, the LORD consents.

**1 Samuel 9**

Saul, a Benjamite, is chosen to be king.

**1 Samuel 10**

Saul is anointed and proclaimed as king.

### **1 Samuel 11**

Saul leads Israel to victory over the Ammonites, their enemies to the east, and Saul is confirmed as king at Gilgal.

### **1 Samuel 12**

The prophet Samuel's farewell address, marking the end of the period of the judges.

### **1 Samuel 13**

King Saul offers an unauthorized sacrifice and, as a consequence, is rejected by God.

### **1 Samuel 14:1-23**

Saul's son Jonathan initiates a daring raid on the Philistines.

### **1 Samuel 14:24-52**

King Saul's foolish vow weakens Israel's attack and endangers his son Jonathan.

### **1 Samuel 15**

The Lord rejects Saul as king for his selective obedience declaring through the prophet Samuel, "to obey is better than sacrifice" (v. 22).

### **1 Samuel 16**

David anointed by the prophet Samuel and serves in Saul's court.

### **1 Samuel 17:1-30**

The Philistine champion Goliath taunts the armies of Israel.

### **1 Samuel 17:31-58**

David fights the Philistine champion Goliath.

### **1 Samuel 18**

David's friendship with Jonathan, his success in Saul's service, and his marriage to Saul's daughter Michal.

### **1 Samuel 19**

King Saul attempts to kill David, whom increasingly he sees as a rival to his throne.

### **1 Samuel 20:1-23**

Jonathan and David plan a means of confirming if Saul intends to kill David.

### **1 Samuel 20:24-42**

Jonathan warns David of Saul's intention to kill David.

### **1 Samuel 21**

David and his men eat the holy bread and flee from Saul to the land of the Philistines.

### **1 Samuel 22**

King Saul kills the priests at Nob.

### **1 Samuel 23**

David saves the Israelite city of Keilah from Philistine attack and flees from Saul into the wilderness.

### **1 Samuel 24**

David spares King Saul's life.

### **1 Samuel 25:1-21**

The prophet Samuel dies. Nabal insults David while Abigail his wife prepares to intervene.

### **1 Samuel 25:22-43**

Abigail's intervention forestalls violent confrontation between David and Nabal.

### **1 Samuel 26**

David spares King Saul a second time.

### **1 Samuel 27**

David flees to the Philistines.

**1 Samuel 28**

King Saul seeks Samuel's counsel through the witch at En-dor.

**1 Samuel 29**

The suspicious Philistines, to whom David had fled to escape Saul, reject David.

**1 Samuel 30**

The wives and children of David and his men are taken capture by marauding Amalekites.

**1 Samuel 31**

The deaths of King Saul and his sons.



## 2 Samuel

### Message

2 Samuel picks up where 1 Samuel left off, with the death of King Saul. The entire book is devoted to the reign of David: his consideration of power and enthronement (1:1–5:5); the capture of Jerusalem and the promise of an everlasting dynasty (5:6–10:19); David's sin and its consequences (11–20); and epilogue (21–24).

### 2 Samuel 1:1-16

David learns of the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan.

### 2 Samuel 1:17-27

David's lament for King Saul and his son Jonathan who were killed battling the Philistines.

### 2 Samuel 2

David anointed King over the tribe of Judah while Ish-bosheth is made king over the remainder of Israel. Conflict between them begins.

### 2 Samuel 3:1-21

Abner, Ish-bosheth's leading warrior, joins with David.

### 2 Samuel 3:22-39

Joab, David's leading warrior, murders Abner, who had attempted to switch sides and join David. David mourns his death.

### 2 Samuel 4

Ish-bosheth, son of Saul and King of Israel less Judah, is murdered.

### 2 Samuel 5

David is anointed king over all Israel at Hebron, and establishes Jerusalem as his residence.

## **2 Samuel 6**

The ark of God is brought to the tabernacle in Jerusalem.

## **2 Samuel 7:1-17**

God promises to build David's house and establish his throne forever.

## **2 Samuel 7:18-29**

David's prayer of thanksgiving for God's promise to build his house and establish his throne forever.

## **2 Samuel 8**

David's victories in war and the officials who serve in his court.

## **2 Samuel 9**

David's kindness to Mephibosheth, the disabled son of Saul.

## **2 Samuel 10**

David avenges the humiliation of his servants, defeating Ammon and Syria.

## **2 Samuel 11**

The sin of David & Bathsheba.

## **2 Samuel 12**

The prophet Nathan rebukes David for his sin in relation to Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah the Hittite.

## **2 Samuel 13:1-19**

David's son Amnon violates his half-sister Tamar.

## **2 Samuel 13:20-39**

Absalom, son of David, avenges the violation of his sister Tamar by murdering his half-brother Amnon.

## **2 Samuel 14**

Absalom, son of David and murderer of his brother Amnon, returns to Jerusalem.

## **2 Samuel 15**

Absalom conspires to seize the crown and forces his father David to flee Jerusalem.

## **2 Samuel 16**

David flees Jerusalem as Absalom his son seizes his house and violates his concubines.

## **2 Samuel 17**

David's loyal counselor Hushai thwarts the counsel of Ahithophel.

## **2 Samuel 18:1-15**

Absalom the son of David is killed in the attempt to seize the throne.

## **2 Samuel 18:16-30**

David learns of his son Absalom's death.

## **2 Samuel 19:1-23**

David is reconciled to those who sided with Absalom during the rebellion.

## **2 Samuel 19:24-43**

The process of reconciliation continues following Absalom's rebellion.

## **2 Samuel 20**

Sheba, of the tribe of Benjamin, leads a rebellion against David, who is supported by Judah alone.

## **2 Samuel 21**

David avenges the Gibeonites.

## **2 Samuel 22:1-25**

Chapter 22 recalls a song of deliverance written by David years before when he was pursued by Saul. It is also recorded, with minor variations, as Psalm 18.

## **2 Samuel 22:26-51**

The conclusion of David's song of deliverance.

## **2 Samuel 23**

Read 23:1-24; 39

The last words of David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel," and the mighty acts of his mighty men (read 23:1-24). Verses 25-38 list a number of other warriors, concluding in v. 39 (read 23:39).

## **2 Samuel 24**

David conducts a census of the people of Israel, and is punished accordingly. 2 Samuel ends with David building an altar at the threshing floor of Araunah (or Ornan) on Mt. Moriah, site of Abraham's offering of Isaac (Genesis 22:2) and future site of the temple (1 Chronicles 22:1; 2 Chronicles 3:1).

## 1 & 2 Kings

### **Author:**

The author of 1 & 2 Kings is unknown. The traditional view was that Jeremiah was the author of 1 & 2 Kings, Jeremiah, and Lamentations. Most scholars see 1 & 2 Kings as part of a historical narrative that begins with Joshua, includes Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings, and was written by a common author or group of writers.

### **Date & Occasion:**

Because 2 Kings ends with Judah's exile to Babylon in 587-86, and yet makes no mention of the return from exile, it is likely to have been written around the midpoint of the exile or 560-550 B.C. Another view is that it was written before the exile, with the final chapter describing the exile being added later.

### **Message:**

Traditionally classified with Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel as one of the "former prophets," the narrative history of 1 & 2 Kings is more than history, but even primarily theology. It provides a message from God about God: His holiness, worship, judgments, mercy, and His faithfulness to His covenants.

### **1 Kings 1:1-27**

David's son Adonijah plots to succeed his father to the throne.

### **1 Kings 1:28-53**

Solomon is anointed king, succeeding his father David to the throne.

### **1 Kings 2:1-25**

The death of King David and the consolidation of Solomon's throne.

### **1 Kings 2:26-46**

Following the death of David, Solomon continues to consolidate his rule.

### **1 Kings 3:1-15**

King Solomon's prayer for wisdom.

### **1 Kings 3:16-28**

Solomon's wisdom, for which he has prayed, is tested.

### **1 Kings 4**

Solomon's officials are listed in verses 1-19, and beginning in verse 20 we are given an account of his reign, wealth, and wisdom (read verses 20-34 only).

### **1 Kings 5**

Preparations for the building of the temple begin.

### **1 Kings 6:1-13**

Construction of the temple in Jerusalem begins.

### **1 Kings 6:14-37**

The construction and decorating of the temple in Jerusalem is completed.

### **1 Kings 7**

Solomon builds his palace (read 7:1-14). Verses 15-50 provide on account of the furnishings made for the temple, the summary of which we will read in verse 51 (read 7:51).

### **1 Kings 8:1-21**

The ark of the covenant of the LORD is brought into the temple in Jerusalem.

### **1 Kings 8:22-53**

Solomon's prayer dedicating the temple

### **1 Kings 8:54-66**

At the dedication of the temple Solomon offers his concluding benediction and celebrates with sacrifices and a great feast.

## **1 Kings 9**

The LORD appears to Solomon a second time and in verses 10-28a summary of Solomon's building projects.

## **1 Kings 10:1-13**

The Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon.

## **1 Kings 10:14-29**

Solomon's great wealth and wisdom.

## **1 Kings 11:1-22**

Solomon's pagan wives turn his heart away from the LORD God of Israel, and the Lord, in response, raises up adversaries against him.

## **1 Kings 11:23-43**

The LORD God of Israel raises up adversaries against Solomon because of his involvement with false gods, and warns of the coming division of the kingdom of Israel.

## **1 Kings 12:1-24**

Rehoboam, son of David and successor to his throne, listens to foolish counsel and his kingdom is divided in 930 B.C., leaving only Judah and Benjamin under his authority.

## **1 Kings 12:25–13:10**

Jeroboam, king over the northern tribes of Israel, institutes idolatrous worship in Bethel and Dan, and is denounced by a man of God.

## **1 Kings 13:11-34**

The prophet from Judah who had denounced Jeroboam king of Israel is punished for his disobedience.

## **1 Kings 14:1-20**

Ahijah the prophet who had prophesied of Jeroboam's rise to power now foretells his doom and the destruction of his house.

### **1 Kings 14:21-31**

Rehoboam, son of David, brings the judgment of God upon the southern kingdom Judah for his toleration of idolatry.

### **1 Kings 15:1-24**

Two Judean Kings: the three-year reign of Abijam (913–910 B.C.) and forty-one year reign of Asa in Judah (910–869 B.C.).

### **1 Kings 15:25–16:7**

Two Israelite Kings: the two-year reign of Nadab (909–908 B.C.) and the 24-year reign of Baasha (908–886 B.C.).

### **1 Kings 16:8-28**

Three kings of Israel: the two-year reign of Elah (886–885 B.C.), and the seven-day reign of Zimri his assassin (885 B.C.), a four-year civil war, and the 12-year reign of Omri the assassin of Zimri (885–874 B.C.).

### **1 Kings 16:29–17:7**

Ahab son of Omri becomes king in Israel in 847 B.C., marries Jezebel, and is confronted by a prophet of God named Elijah.

### **1 Kings 17:8-24**

Elijah supplies food for the hungry and raises the dead to life.

### **1 Kings 18:1-19**

Elijah confronts wicked Ahab, king of Israel.

### **1 Kings 18:20-46**

Elijah's victory on Mt. Carmel over the prophets of Baal.

### **1 Kings 19**

Elijah flees from Jezebel south to Mt. Horeb (Sinai) where God meets him in "a still small voice."

### **1 Kings 20:1-25**

King Ben-hadad of Syria provokes a war with King Ahab of Israel.

**1 Kings 20:26-43**

King Ben-hadad of Syria provokes a second war with King Ahab of Israel.

**1 Kings 21**

King Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard, and with Jezebel plots to murder Naboth and confiscate his property.

**1 Kings 22:1-28**

Micaiah prophesies King Ahab's defeat and death in his third war against Syria.

**1 Kings 22:29-53**

The Syrians defeat the coalition army of Judah and Israel, King Ahab is killed in battle, and is succeeded by his son, Ahaziah.



## **2 Kings**

Remembering that 1 & 2 Kings were originally one book, sharing the same author(s) and date of composition (probably about the mid-point of the exile of the Hebrews in Babylon [c. 560–550 B.C.]), we continue its account of the monarchies in Judah and Israel.

### **2 Kings 1**

King Ahaziah of Israel, son of Ahab and Jezebel, is rebuked by Elijah for his idolatry in 852 B.C.

### **2 Kings 2**

Elijah is taken to heaven accompanied by a chariot of fire. His mantle falls upon Elisha his successor.

### **2 Kings 3**

King Jehosaphat of Judah and King Jerhoram of Israel crush a Moabite rebellion.

### **2 Kings 4:1-17**

Elisha exercises a Messianic ministry: aiding a widow in her distress and making the barren womb fruitful.

### **2 Kings 4:18-43**

Elisha performs Messianic miracles: raising the dead and feeding the hungry.

### **2 Kings 5**

Naaman, a captain of the Syrian army, is healed of leprosy while Gehazi's greed is punished.

### **2 Kings 6:1-23**

As a great Syrian army surrounds Elisha and his servant in Dothan, God demonstrates that "those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (verse 16).

### **2 Kings 6:24–7:2**

Elisha promises that the terrible siege of Samaria will end.

## **2 Kings 7:3-20**

Four lepers discover that through divine intervention the Syrian army has fled leaving behind plenty for the famished people of Israel, even as Elisha had promised.

## **2 Kings 8**

The restoration of the Shunamite woman's land, the murder of king Ben-hadad of Syria (verses 1-15); the eight-year reign of Jerhoam in Judah (848–841 B.C.) and the one-year reign of Ahaziah in Judah (841 B.C.) (verses 16-29).

## **2 Kings 9:1-16**

Jehu, a commander in Israel's army, is anointed king of Israel and sets out to assassinate Joram, the then reigning king.

## **2 Kings 9:17-37**

Jehu, a commander in Israel's army, assassinates Joram, king of Israel, Ahaziah king of Judah, and Queen Jezebel, mother of Joram and wife of the late King Ahab.

## **2 Kings 10:1-17**

Jehu, anointed king by one of the sons of the prophets, destroys the household of Ahab.

## **2 Kings 10:18-36**

Jehu destroys the prophets of Baal and reigns 27 years in Israel (841–814 B.C.).

## **2 Kings 11**

Joash, sole surviving descendant of David, is anointed king of Judah in defiance of the Queen-mother Athaliah, and Baalism is destroyed in Judah.

## **2 Kings 12**

Jehoash/Joash's 40-year reign in Judah (835–796 B.C.) and the repairs to the temple he initiated.

### **2 Kings 13:1-13**

Two kings of Israel: Jehoahaz's 17-year reign (814–798 B.C.)  
And Jehoash/Joash's 16-year reign (798–782 B.C.).

### **2 Kings 13:14-25**

The death of Elisha.

### **2 Kings 14:1-16**

The first fourteen years of Amaziah's reign in Judah (796–782 B.C.), his wars with Edom and with Jehoash of Israel.

### **2 Kings 14:17-29**

The last fifteen years of the reign of Amaziah in Judah (782–767 B.C.) and the 41-year reign of Jeroboam II in Israel (793–753 B.C.).

### **2 Kings 15:1-22**

The 52-year reign of Azariah (also called Uzziah) in Judah (792–740 B.C.) and three kings of Israel: the short reigns of Zechariah (753 B.C.), Shallum (752 B.C.), and the ten-year reign of Menahem (752–742 B.C.).

### **2 Kings 15:23-37**

The short reign of Pekahiah in Israel (742–740 B.C.), the 20-year reign of Pehah (752–732 B.C.), during which Tiglath-pileser of Assyria captures and carries off portions of northern Israel into captivity (733–732 B.C.), and 16-year reign of Jotham in Judah (750–735 B.C.)

### **2 Kings 16**

The 16-year reign of Ahaz in Judah (735–715 B.C.), during which Syria is destroyed by Assyria at the instigation of Ahaz.

### **2 Kings 17:1-23**

In the ninth year of King Hoshea (732–722 B.C.), Assyria conquers and deports the northern kingdom Israel, which is never again to rise.

## **2 Kings 17:24-41**

The Assyrians resettle the northern territories of Israel, hereafter called Samaria, with their subjects from other lands, who mingle the fear of the LORD with the service of their idols.

## **2 Kings 18:1-18**

Faithful King Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.) rids Judah of idolatry and does what is right in the eyes of the LORD. In the 14<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (701 B.C.) King Sennacherib of Assyria attacks Judah and besieges Jerusalem.

## **2 Kings 18:19-37**

Jerusalem, surrounded and besieged by the Assyrians, is threatened by Rabshakeh, an official of the Assyrian king.

## **2 Kings 19:1-19**

Following the threats of the Assyrian official Rabshakeh, Hezekiah seeks the prayers of the prophet Isaiah and offers his own prayer for deliverance.

## **2 Kings 19:20-37**

Isaiah prophesies in 701 B.C. of the destruction of the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem, and the return of Sennacherib to Nineveh.

## **2 Kings 20**

King Hezekiah recovers from a mortal illness and greets envoys from Babylon.

## **2 Kings 21**

Two Judean Kings: Hezekiah's son Manasseh, his long and evil reign of 55 years (697–642 B.C.); and the short and evil reign of Amon his son (642–640 B.C.).

## **2 Kings 22**

Good King Josiah (640–609 B.C.), son of Amon and grandson of Manasseh, initiates the repairs of the temple, and in the process discovers the long-neglected scrolls of the “Book of the Law,” probably the book of Deuteronomy.

## **2 Kings 23:1-20**

On the basis of the “Book of the Covenant,” probably the book of Deuteronomy, Josiah attacks idolatry and reforms the practice of religion in Judea.

## **2 Kings 23:21-37**

Josiah continues his reforms, restoring the Passover as commanded in the Book of the Covenant, until killed in battle, ending his 31-year reign in 609 B.C. He is succeeded by his sons Jehoahaz (609 B.C.) and Jehoiakim (609–698 B.C.)

## **2 Kings 24**

Because Jehoiakim resists Babylonian rule, Jerusalem falls to Nebuchadnezzar on March 16, 597. The king, his household, skilled workers, warriors, and temple treasures are deported to Babylon, and Zedekiah is made king in his place.

## **2 Kings 25**

Jerusalem is recaptured by the Babylonians in July of 586 B.C. and the population is deported. Yet 2 Kings ends on a hopeful note, as thirty-seven years later, in March of 561 B.C., the first mercy is experienced by the exiles.



## 1 & 2 Chronicles

### Author

The author of 1 & 2 Chronicles is unknown, though Jewish tradition regarded Ezra as the author of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Luther (1483–1546) followed the tradition of Jerome (ca. 342–419), translator of the Latin Vulgate, in referring to these writings as “The Chronicle of the entire sacred history.” From this the convention of calling the author “the Chronicler” developed. The author worked from a number of sources referred to throughout the text, biblical and extra-biblical.

### Date & Occasion

The Chronicles were written after the release of the Judean exiles from Babylon in 538 B.C. and, probably given the absence of Hellenistic influences, before the conquests of Alexander (ca. 331 B.C.). Some scholars date Chronicles to as early as the time of the reconstruction of the temple under Zerubbabel (c. 520–515 B.C.), though the majority place it within the broader period of 515–400 B.C. Though it parallels the history of Israel recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings, it does so with the aim of encouraging and guiding the exiles returning from Babylon as they seek to restore the kingdom.

### Message

1 & 2 Chronicles present the pattern of life that the returned exiles are to establish by recalling pre-exilic Israel in a more idealized form than that found in Samuel–Kings. For example, David’s sin with Bathsheba is omitted. Emphasis is given to the Davidic kingship, the temple and priesthood, and the close connection between faithfulness and blessing on the one hand, and infidelity and judgment on the other. In the end the Chronicles point to the Messiah, who alone fulfills the Davidic ideal (Luke 1:32; Romans 13), who alone is the perfect sacrifice and priest (Hebrews 9:11-28; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 John 2:2), and who consequently fulfills the purpose of the temple (John 2:19-22), and in whom the people of God are fully reconstituted (Galatians 3:14,29; 4:28).

## **1 Chronicles 1–9**

The Chronicler establishes the legitimacy of the claim of the returning exiles to be God’s chosen people by tracing their genealogy from Adam forward through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the 12 tribes to the returning exiles. Extended treatment is given to David’s descendants because of the importance of a legitimate monarchy (chapters 2–4), and to Levi’s descendants because of the importance of reestablishing a legitimate priesthood.

## **1 Chronicles 10**

We pick up the story of Israel in chapter 10 with the Chronicler’s account of the death of Saul and his sons.

## **1 Chronicles 11**

Read 11:1-25

David is anointed King at Hebron by “all Israel” and he leads the conquest of Jerusalem, then a Jebusite city (read 11:1-25). Verses 26-47 continue the list of David’s “mighty men” (these verses may be skipped).

## **1 Chronicles 12**

Read 12:1,2, 8, 14-22, 38-40

The listing of David’s mighty men continues: verses 3-7 provide a number of their names (read 12:1,2). We pick up again at verse 8 (read 12:8): the list of names continues in verses 9-13. We continue at verse 14 (read 12:14-22): verses 23-37 record the number of troops from each tribe who came to Hebron to support the establishment of David’s monarchy. We continue at verse 38 with the Chronicler’s emphasis upon the “single mind” of “all Israel” when David’s monarch was established (read 12:38-40).

## **1 Chronicles 13**

Tragedy strikes when the ark of God is improperly transported from Kiriath-jearim in Judah part of the way to Jerusalem.

## **1 Chronicles 14**

David's growing prestige and power.

## **1 Chronicles 15**

Read 15:1-16, 25-29

The ark of God is properly transported to Jerusalem with great rejoicing: verses 17-24 list the musicians, singers, and gatekeeper. The account of the celebration as the ark is transported from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem continues at verse 25.

## **1 Chronicles 16:1-22**

The establishment of authorized worship in Jerusalem with sacrifices, Levitical choirs and instrumentalists, and psalmody (Psalms 105, 96, and 106 were sung).

## **1 Chronicles 16:23-43**

The inaugural celebration of authorized worship concludes with the singing of Psalms 96 and 106 (the parts of the Psalms recorded probably indicating the singing of the whole Psalm: verses 23-33 = Psalm 96:1-13a; verses 34-36 = Psalm 106:1,47,48), and the establishing of the pattern of daily morning and evening sacrifices offered with "sacred song" and instrumental music.

## **1 Chronicles 17**

The next 13 chapters are concerned with the preparations for the building of the temple. In chapter 17 David is commissioned not to build but to prepare for the construction of the temple that will take place under his son.

## **1 Chronicles 18**

David's military victories contribute security and wealth for the construction of the temple.

## **1 Chronicles 19**

David's victory over the Ammonites and their Syrian allies contributes to the political security necessary for the building of the temple.

## **1 Chronicles 20**

David subdues both the Ammonites and Philistines, thereby establishing the political security necessary for the building of the temple.

## **1 Chronicles 21:1–22:1**

David's census brings trouble to the nation of Israel, but leads to the discovery of the site at which the temple will be built.

## **1 Chronicles 22:2-19**

David gathers workmen and materials, and charges his son Solomon to build the temple, "the house of the LORD (our) God" (v. 11).

## **1 Chronicles 23**

Read 23:1-6, 13b. 14-23

Read 23:24-32

Temple preparations continue as David organizes the Levites.

## **1 Chronicles 24–28:8**

Read 28:1-8

Preparations for the work of the temple continue as David organizes the priests (chapter 24), the musicians "who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals" (25:1ff), the gatekeepers and the treasurers (chapter 26), and the military and other leaders (chapter 27), and charges them in chapter 28:1-8.

## **1 Chronicles 28:9–21**

David turns over to Solomon the plans for the temple and charges him to complete its construction.

## **1 Chronicles 29**

1 Chronicles concludes with the offerings collected for the temple, David's prayer of dedication, his death, and the succession of Solomon to the throne.

## **2 Chronicles**

Originally one book with 1 Chronicles, the Chronicler continues his account of the history of Israel from Solomon through the exile and return, focusing primarily on the southern kingdom and the Davidic monarchy as he writes to encourage the reestablishment of kingship and temple in the post-exilic era.

### **2 Chronicles 1**

Solomon's worship, wisdom and wealth at the outset of his reign.

### **2 Chronicles 2**

Solomon prepares to build the temple in Jerusalem.

### **2 Chronicles 3**

Solomon builds the temple in Jerusalem.

### **2 Chronicles 4**

The furnishings for the temple are completed.

### **2 Chronicles 5**

The ark of the covenant is brought into the completed temple in Jerusalem with blood sacrifices and sung praise.

### **2 Chronicles 6:1-21**

At the dedication of the just completed temple in Jerusalem Solomon blesses the people and prays.

### **2 Chronicles 6:22-42**

Solomon continues his prayer of dedication at the inaugural service in the temple in Jerusalem, concluding with Psalm 132, verses 8-10 of which are recorded in verses 41-42.

### **2 Chronicles 7**

The conclusion of the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem and the LORD's promises and warnings.

## **2 Chronicles 8**

Solomon's accomplishments at the 20-year mark of his reign (950 B.C.) are reviewed while his failings, recorded in 1 Kings, are omitted.

## **2 Chronicles 9**

The visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon representing the Davidic monarchy at its height.

## **2 Chronicles 10**

The revolt against Solomon's son and heir Rehoboam and the consequent division of the nation into the southern kingdom, Judah, and the northern kingdom, Israel.

## **2 Chronicles 11**

Rehoboam (930–917 B.C.) secures his rule over the southern kingdom, Judah, obeying the word of the LORD and receiving His blessing.

## **2 Chronicles 12**

Rehoboam's abandonment of the law of the LORD leads to hardship.

## **2 Chronicles 13**

Rehoboam's son Abijah succeeds him to the throne (913–910 B.C.) and wins a great victory over Jeroboam and the northern kingdom of Israel.

## **2 Chronicles 14**

Asa succeeds his father Abijah to the throne and reigns for 41 years (910–869 B.C.). He does what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD.

## **2 Chronicles 15**

Religious reform and revival under King Asa (910–869 B.C.).

## **2 Chronicles 16**

After 35 years of righteous rule, Asa turns from seeking the LORD to trusting in man in the last 6 years of his reign (874–869 B.C.).

## **2 Chronicles 17**

Jehoshaphat succeeds his father Asa to the throne and reigns for 24 years (872–848 B.C.).

## **2 Chronicles 18**

King Jehoshaphat of Judah's disastrous alliance with King Ahab of Israel, the northern kingdom.

## **2 Chronicles 19**

King Jehoshaphat establishes a system of courts in Judah to enforce the Law of God.

## **2 Chronicles 20**

King Jehoshaphat responds to a Canaanite military alliance with prayer and the LORD delivers Judah from its enemies.

## **2 Chronicles 21**

Jehoram succeeds his father Jehoshaphat to Judah's throne and rules for eight years (848–841 B.C.). His evil reign brings the condemnation and judgment of God.

## **2 Chronicles 22**

Ahaziah the son of evil king Jehoram succeeds his father to Judah's throne and rules for one year (841 B.C.). He is succeeded by his mother Athaliah, daughter of King Ahab of Israel, who destroys the entire Davidic line, save one, Joash.

## **2 Chronicles 23**

Jehoiada the priest covenants with military leaders, Levites and heads of households to crown Joash king, in defiance of Athaliah the queen.

### **2 Chronicles 24:1-16**

Joash begins to reign at the age of seven in 835 B.C. and compliments the reforms of Jehoiada the priest with the restoration of the temple which had been deteriorated under Queen Athaliah.

### **2 Chronicles 24:17-27**

Following the death of Jehoiada the priest, King Joash and all Judah return to idolatry with disastrous consequences.

### **2 Chronicles 25**

Amaziah succeeds his father King Joash to the throne of Judah and reigns for 29 years (796–767 B.C.). He begins well (verses 1-13) but his success leads to idolatry and pride and his downfall.

### **2 Chronicles 26**

Uzziah (Azariah) succeeds his father Amaziah to the throne of Judah and reigns for 52 years (792–740 B.C.). Like his father he begins well but pride proves his undoing.

### **2 Chronicles 27–28:4**

Jotham succeeds his father Uzziah to the throne and rules well for 16 years (750–736 B.C.). He is succeeded by his son Ahaz. Idolatry brings God's judgments upon Judah during his 16 years on the throne (735–715 B.C.).

### **2 Chronicles 28:5-27**

The idolatry of Ahaz brings defeat to Judah at the hands of Syria, Israel, and the Assyrians, leading to further idolatry.

### **2 Chronicles 29:1-19**

Good King Hezekiah succeeds his evil father Ahaz to the throne of Judah and reigns for 29 years (715–686 B.C.). He repairs the damage done to the temple during his father's reign.

### **2 Chronicles 29:20-36**

Hezekiah reopens the temple (which had been closed during the reign of his father Ahaz) and restores its worship.

## **2 Chronicles 30**

Hezekiah reunites the southern kingdom of Judah and the remnant of the northern kingdom, represented as Ephraim and Manasseh (v. 1) in the observance of Passover.

## **2 Chronicles 31**

Hezekiah organizes the priests and the collection and storage of the tithes.

## **2 Chronicles 32:1-19**

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, lays siege to Jerusalem and taunts Judah and the God of Israel.

## **2 Chronicles 32:20-33**

The LORD delivers Jerusalem from the Assyrian siege through Hezekiah's prayer.

## **2 Chronicles 33**

Evil King Manasseh succeeds his good father Hezekiah to the throne and reigns 55 years (697–642 B.C.), the longest of any king of Judah. His revival of Canaanite idolatry results in deportation by the Assyrians, while his humble repentance leads to restoration. His son Amon succeeds him to the throne (642–640 B.C.).

## **2 Chronicles 34:1-21**

Josiah succeeds his father Amon to the throne and reigns 31 years. He cleanses the land of idolatry, restores the Temple and its worship, and discovers the Book of the Law of the LORD, probably Deuteronomy.

## **2 Chronicles 34:22–35:6**

King Josiah and the people of Judah covenant together to keep the LORD's commandments written in the newly discovered Book of the Covenant, and prepare to keep the Passover.

## **2 Chronicles 35:7-27**

A Passover of unprecedented scope is kept by King Josiah and the people of Israel.

## **2 Chronicles 36**

Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, the three sons of Josiah, and grandson Jehoiachin, are each deposed and deported through a series of Babylonian invasions between 605 and 586 B.C., finally ending with the destruction of Jerusalem, the exiling of the survivors, and the removal of its treasures. Yet 2 Chronicles ends on a hopeful note, the proclamation of Cyrus 70 years later ordering the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the return of the Judean exiles in 538 B.C.

## **Author**

The Hebrew Priest Ezra is traditionally held to be the author of Ezra and Nehemiah, which originally were one book.

## **Date & Occasion**

Ezra is believed to have been written between 430-400 B.C., the same period as: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. He records the story of the return from exile in Babylon of those who had been deported there following the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. He writes to encourage the continuing work of reestablishing Israel in the land of promise.

## **Message**

Above all Ezra writes of the sovereignty of God, of God working sovereignly through human agents (e.g. Cyrus, King of Medo-Persian Empire) in order to honor His covenant promises, save His covenant people, and restore true worship.

## **Ezra 1**

Cyrus, King of Persia and conqueror of Babylon, issues a proclamation in 538 B.C. allowing the Judean exiles to return to Judah and requiring that the house of the LORD be rebuilt.

## **Ezra 2, 3**

Read 2:68–3:13

Chapter 2 lists the numbers and families of the returning exiles. Chapter 3 tells of the rebuilding of the altar and the temple. We join Ezra's account at 2:68 (read through end of chapter 3).

## **Ezra 4**

Opposition to the rebuilding of the temple succeeds in causing extended delays from the time of King Cyrus (530's B.C.) until the second year of the reign of King Darius (520 B.C.)

## **Ezra 5**

At the prodding of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the reconstruction of the temple resumes in 520 B.C. after a long delay.

## **Ezra 6**

Persian King Darius reissues Cyrus' decree to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem and orders that its reconstruction be completed without delay. It is completed in 515 B.C., four years after the work was renewed, 20 years after the work was begun (3:8), and 70 years after Solomon's temple was destroyed.

## **Ezra 7**

Sixty years after the completion of the temple, or about 458 B.C., Ezra arrives from Babylon with the support of King Artaxerxes of Persia in order to teach the Law of the LORD.

## **Ezra 8**

Read 8:21-36

Verses 1-14 record the names of the heads of households who accompanied Ezra and verses 15-20 the names of the Levites who were persuaded to return. Beginning at verse 21 we read of preparation for the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem.

## **Ezra 9**

Four and a half months after Ezra's arrival he faces a crisis: some of the returning Judeans had intermarried with unbelievers.

## **Ezra 10**

Read 10:1-19,44

The leadership and then the whole assembly of Israel agrees to "put away" their pagan wives.

## **Nehemiah**

### **Author**

Both Ezra and Nehemiah were believed to have been written by Ezra.

### **Date & Occasion**

Ezra wrote in the period of 430–400 B.C. Together the books of Ezra and Nehemiah provide the record of Judah's return from exile in Babylon (where they have been since Jerusalem's fall in 587), beginning with the Persian Emperor Cyrus' decree to return recorded in Ezra 1. Nehemiah 1 picks up the story with Nehemiah in Babylon receiving a discouraging report in 446 of the lack of progress among the returnees in Jerusalem who were struggling to reestablish Israel in the land of Palestine.

### **Message**

The sovereignty of God, who so governs the nations and guides history that His covenant promises to His beloved people cannot fail. Israel *shall* be reestablished in the land of promise.

### **Nehemiah 1**

Ninety-two years have passed since Cryus' decree permitting the Hebrew exiles to return to Canaan. Twelve years have passed since Ezra joined them in 458 B.C. Now 446 B.C., Nehemiah hears a discouraging report about the slow progress of the work in Jerusalem and prays.

### **Nehemiah 2**

King Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to Judah to help rebuild the city (445 B.C.).

### **Nehemiah 3, 4**

Read chapter 4:1-21

Chapter 3 lists the names of those who undertook the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem demonstrating that the project involved the whole people of God, great and small, skilled and unskilled.

Chapter 4 – opposition to Nehemiah comes out into the open as Sanballat, governor of Samaria, the area north of Judah, and Tobiah, governor of Ammon, east of Judah, mock and threaten those working on the walls of Jerusalem.

### **Nehemiah 5**

Problems caused by external enemies give way to problems originating from within the people of God, particularly relating to usury.

### **Nehemiah 6:1–7:3**

Israel's enemies conspire to prevent the completion of the wall surrounding Jerusalem.

### **Nehemiah 7:4–8:18**

Read 7:4-6; 8:1-18

Following the completion of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah consults the register of the exiles who had returned: (read 7:4-6) Verses 7-73 list the returnees and some of their resources. In Chapter 8 the renewal of the covenant begins with Ezra's reading of the Law of God.

### **Nehemiah 9:1-21**

The reading of the Law of God is followed by the confession of sin, the first part of which is a prayer of praise for creation and redemption.

### **Nehemiah 9:22-38**

The children of Israel continue in their praise of God's redemption of Israel in verses 22-25, leading to the confession of the nation's sins in verses 26-38 as a prelude to the renewal of the covenant.

### **Nehemiah 10**

Read 1a, 28-39

Following the reading of the Law in chapter 8 (i.e. the terms of the covenant) and the confession of sin in chapter 9 (i.e. acknowledging failure to keep the terms of the covenant) the

covenant is renewed in chapter 10. (Read v. 1a) A list of names follows in verses 1b-27. (Read verses 28-39)

### **Nehemiah 11–12**

Read 12:27-47

Chapters 11 and 12 provide lists of names: of those who were chosen by lot to live in Jerusalem, of those who were to live outside of Jerusalem, and of the priests and Levites. We return to the narrative at 12:27 with the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.

### **Nehemiah 13**

Having completed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and renewed the covenant, Nehemiah returned to the Persian court in 433 B.C. for an unspecified time (v. 6). When he returned he found corruption needing reform.



## **Esther**

### **Author & Date**

Author is unknown, but given his knowledge of Persian court, customs, and geography likely to be a Hebrew living in Susa, capital of the Persian empire, likely in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

### **Occasion**

Esther is set in the context of the Persian court at a time of threatened persecution at the hand of a royal officer named Haman. It traces the responses to the challenge on the part of Mordecai and his adopted daughter Esther, neither of whom are particularly devout, but both of whom rise to the occasion believing that God has placed them in positions of influence and opportunity “for such a time as this” (4:14).

### **Esther 1**

Queen Vashti’s refusal to obey King Ahasuerus leads to consternation among the princes of Persia, lest all the women of Persia refuse to obey their husbands.

### **Esther 2**

Esther, a Jewish girl being raised by her close relative Mordecai, is chosen to succeed the disfavored Vashti as queen of the Persian King Ahasuerus.

### **Esther 3**

The evil royal official Haman, enraged by Mordecai’s refusal to bow before him, plots the annihilation of the Judean exiles throughout the Persian Empire.

### **Esther 4**

Mordecai urges Esther to appeal to King Ahasuerus to rescind his edict commanding the annihilation of the Judean exiles throughout the Persian Empire, reminding her that it may be that she was placed in her high position “for such a time as this” (4:14).

### **Esther 5**

Esther prepares a feast for the king and the wicked Haman, while Haman prepares gallows for Mordecai.

### **Esther 6**

The king honors Mordecai for prior service that had gone unrecognized, through the same Haman who had been plotting Mordecai's death.

### **Esther 7**

Esther pleads with King Ahasuerus to save her people and exposes Haman as the one planning their destruction.

### **Esther 8**

The king rewards Esther and Mordecai, revokes Haman's edict of annihilation, and permits the Judean exiles to defend themselves.

### **Esther 9:1-19**

The Judean exiles in Susa and throughout the Persian Empire destroy their enemies and celebrate their victory.

### **Esther 9:20-10:3**

Queen Esther and Mordecai institute a new annual holiday, the feast of Purim, to celebrate the victory of the Judean exiles over their enemies in the Persian Empire.

## **Introduction to the Wisdom Books**

Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes are typically classified as wisdom literature. The distinctive characteristic of wisdom literature is that it teaches truth not by command, as in the Law, not by threats and promises, as in the prophets, but by observation and reflection. The wisdom books provide divinely-inspired conclusions about life based on shrewd awareness of the nature of things: nature itself, humanity, society, and God. They provide not so much commands as counsel; not so much rules as practical advice. They say, “given what we know about God, and about the way things work and how people are, here is what you must do.” Always, it is “the fear of the LORD” that is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10).



# **Job**

## **Author**

Though about Job, the author was likely a skillful unnamed poet of Israel.

## **Date & Occasion**

Though the date of writing is unknown, its classical Hebrew places it after 1500 B.C. and before the end of Solomon's era, or perhaps even later when Hebrew wisdom writing was at its peak. It was written to address the question of why the righteous at times suffer in a manner or to an extent that appears unjust.

## **Message**

Job and his tormenters share the simplistic view that all suffering is a result of personal sin. On that basis Job complains that God is unjust in making him suffer and his counselors insist that he must be guilty. The book of Job confirms that the righteous often do suffer, not merely for their personal sins, but for reasons hidden from them and known only to God. Conversely the wicked often in this world seem to get away with their evil. Though this pattern often is perplexing to the people of God, God's goodness is affirmed and patience is the necessary response (James 5:11). Job teaches us to love God not for His benefits but for His own sake. According to Luther, Job is "magnificent and sublime as no other book of Scripture."

## **Job 1**

Satan is allowed to test righteous Job, a man blessed by and devoted to God.

## **Job 2**

Satan is allowed to test Job further, this time afflicting his body.

## **Job 3**

Amidst his suffering, Job bitterly laments the day of his birth.

#### **Job 4**

Eliphaz opens the first circle of speeches, which extends to chapter 14, as Job and his friends debate the reasons for his suffering.

#### **Job 5**

Job's "friend" Eliphaz continues his speech suggesting that the innocent do not suffer.

#### **Job 6**

Job replies to Eliphaz: my complaint is just, my suffering is unjust.

#### **Job 7**

Job continues his reply to Eliphaz, now addressing himself to God: leave me alone, he pleads (v. 16).

#### **Job 8**

Bildad answers Job simplistically: suffering is a result of sin; seek God and mercy and He will restore you.

#### **Job 9**

Job replies to Bildad, affirming God's wisdom and power in verses 1-13, but questioning His justice in verses 14-35, and voicing the need for an "arbiter" in verse 33, a role fulfilled by "the one mediator between God and men" (1 Timothy 2:5).

#### **Job 10**

Job continues his reply to Bildad, now addressing himself to God, complaining of the injustice of his suffering.

#### **Job 11**

Zophar, the most severe of Job's "comforters," now enters the discussion, misapplying truth by assuming guilt where there is none.

## **Job 12**

Job replies to Zophar, his most severe critic, with a “blast of sarcasm” (RSB) and an extended affirmation of God’s sovereignty.

## **Job 13**

Job’s reply to Zophar continues, Job chastising his friends as “worthless physicians,” and beginning in verse 20 to address his complaint directly to God.

## **Job 14**

Job’s reply to Zophar begun in chapter 12, concludes with Job looking for vindication beyond the grave.

## **Job 15**

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar have each had an opportunity to respond to Job and, in turn, have heard Job’s responses (chapters 4-14). Chapter 15 begins a second circle of speeches and responses, in turn, from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (chapters 15-21). In chapter 15 Eliphaz returns to his earlier theme, insisting with greater vehemence and sarcasm that only the guilty suffer.

## **Job 16**

Job answers his “miserable comforters” and their “windy words” complaining of God’s mistreatment of him and reaffirming his innocence.

## **Job 17**

Job concludes his answer to Eliphaz complaining, “where then is my hope?” (verse 15).

## **Job 18**

Bildad delivers his second speech, rebuking Job’s disrespect for his “comforters,” and reaffirming that God makes only the wicked to suffer.

### **Job 19**

Job accuses God of wronging him: of injustice, of stripping him of honor, or alienating him from friends and relatives, of so afflicting him that he escapes death by “the skin of (his) teeth” (verse 20); and yet he affirms, “I know that my Redeemer lives” (verse 25).

### **Job 20**

Zophar, in his second speech, describes the terrible fate of the wicked, but misapplies this truth to Job.

### **Job 21**

Job closes the second cycle of speeches firmly rejecting that the wicked always, or even typically, suffer for their sins.

### **Job 22**

The third circle of speeches begins in chapter 22 and extends through chapter 26. For the third time Eliphaz and Bildad will speak and Job will respond, though this time Zophar remains silent. Eliphaz lists the sins of which he alleges Job is guilty and calls him to repent.

### **Job 23**

Job grows confident of his ultimate vindication: though tested, he shall “come out as gold” (verse 6).

### **Job 24**

Job complains that justice is unevenly applied. The wicked thrive and inflict suffering on the innocent, and God seems to do nothing.

### **Job 25,26**

Bildad’s final speech repeats the themes of God’s purity and human worthlessness, yet as was consistent with Job’s “friends,” without a hint of God’s grace. Job’s response follows in chapter 26.

### **Job 27**

Job concludes his response to his “comforters,” defending his integrity to the end, concluding the third cycle of speeches.

### **Job 28**

Job begins an extended monologue which continues through chapter 31. In chapter 28 he considers the elusiveness of true wisdom.

### **Job 29**

Job looks back to his days of virtue, prosperity, and influence, when God looked upon him with favor and men looked upon him with respect.

### **Job 30**

Job laments that all the good that he once enjoyed, which he reviewed in chapter 29, has now been taken from him.

### **Job 31**

Job’s final protest of innocence and cry for vindication.

### **Job 32**

The young man Elihu speaks for the first time. His monologue continues through chapter 37.

### **Job 33**

Elihu introduces the themes of redemptive suffering and mercy.

### **Job 34**

Elihu defends God’s goodness and justice.

### **Job 35**

Elihu answers Job’s accusations.

### **Job 36**

Elihu extols God’s power and righteousness and cautions restraint in suffering.

### **Job 37**

Elihu highlights Job's limitations as measured by God's greatness.

### **Job 38**

The LORD answers Job characterizing his complaints as "words without knowledge" and asking questions which highlight his ignorance.

### **Job 39**

The LORD continues asking Job questions which highlight the limitations of his knowledge.

### **Job 40**

Job drops his demand for vindication and is reduced to silence as God continues His cross-examination.

### **Job 41**

The LORD's cross-examination of Job, consisting of questions which highlight the limitations of his knowledge, continues.

### **Job 42**

Job repents, the LORD rebukes his friends, and Job's prosperity is restored.

## **Introduction to Hebrew Poetry**

Poetry may be found throughout the Old Testament. It may be found sprinkled throughout the historical narratives (e.g. Miriam's, Hannah's, and Deborah's songs), and in the Wisdom literature (e.g. Job), and in extended passages in the Prophets.

Only two books of the Bible may properly be considered poetic: Psalms and Song of Solomon. We should note Hebrew poetry rarely consists of rhymes, but is normally thematic and is expressed through a variety of types of parallelism, successive lines sometimes duplicating, sometimes extending, and sometimes repeating an idea by way of antithesis. Hebrew poetry also features alliteration and meter.



### **Author**

David, the “sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1), is the most frequently cited author of the Psalms, with nearly two-thirds of the total being attributed to him. Also identified as authors are Moses (1), Solomon (2), the sons of Korah (12), Asaph (12), and Ethan the Ezrahite (1). A number of Psalms have no designated author.

### **Date & Occasion**

The Psalms were written over a period of several centuries beginning with Moses (Psalm 90) and ending perhaps with the period after the exile from Babylon (e.g. Psalm 126). A number of the Psalms (14) reference historical occasions in the superscriptions, but these are not part of the original text. Regardless, whatever their historical occasion the Psalms are general enough that they can be used in a variety of settings.

### **Message**

The word “Psalm” means song. The Psalms are songs composed for use in the worship of Israel and later in the church. Together they form both the hymn book and prayer book of the people of God in the Old and New Testaments. The Psalter is divided into 5 books (Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150), and scholars commonly distinguish 6 Psalm genres: Praise, laments, thanksgiving, confidence (or trust), kingship, and wisdom. The Psalms are both comprehensive and holistic. Luther regarded the Psalter as “a little Bible.” Calvin called it “an anatomy of all parts of the soul;” Augustine, reflecting the outlook of Jesus and the New Testament writers (e.g. Luke 24:44; Matthew 27:46; 22:41-46; Hebrews 2:12), urged that “the voice of Christ and His church is well-nigh the only voice to be heard in the Psalms.” It teaches us both how to pray and what to sing to God.

### **Psalm 1**

The first Psalm, a wisdom Psalm, should be understood as an introduction or “preface” (Henry) to the whole Psalter.

describing the blessedness that comes from meditating upon Psalms, and contrasting that with the path of the wicked.

### **Psalm 2**

One of the most clearly Messianic and frequently cited in the New Testament of the Psalms. We hear its echo at Jesus' baptism (verse 7; cf. Matthew 3:17), and at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; 2 Peter 1:17), and it is cited as predictive of the crucifixion (verses 1-2; cf Acts 4:25-38), the resurrection (verse 7; cf. Acts 13:33), and reign of Christ (verse 9; cf. Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). Though initially applied to David, Solomon, and their successors, it looks beyond them to a greater than David or Solomon.

### **Psalm 3**

A Psalm of David which expresses deep trust in circumstances of deep distress, which, according to the superscription, was written "when (David) fled from Absalom his son."

### **Psalm 4**

Spurgeon entitled the previous Psalm "The Morning Hymn" (see verse 5) and this one "The Evening Hymn" (see verse 4). Some of the concerns of Psalm 3 continue in Psalm 4, in perhaps the same setting (that of his flight from Absalom). A Psalm of David

### **Psalm 5**

A morning Psalm and prayer (verse 3), offered in a time of distress. Verse 9 was cited by the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:13 in support of his argument for the universality of human depravity. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 6**

The first of seven "penitential psalms" (with 25, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143), prayed by one who is "greatly troubled" yet in the end, trusting God (verses 9,10). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 7**

According to the superscription, written on the occasion of the false accusations of one Cush, a Benjamite (i.d. unknown).

against David, made to Saul, always eager to believe the worst about David. It has been called “the song of the slandered saint.” A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 8**

The excellency of God contrasted with the insignificance yet exalted destiny of humanity, ultimately realized in the God-Man Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:6-8). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 9**

Psalms 9 and 10 form a single (though incomplete) acrostic. They should be read as companion psalms, each dealing with “wrestling faith” (Motyer), each struggling with the opposition of the wicked. Thanksgiving and praise in verses 1-12 turns to lament and plea in verses 13ff. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 10**

The complaint begun in verse 13 of Psalm 9 continues as the psalmist complains of the active oppression of the wicked and the passive response of God, calling upon God to arise and act.

### **Psalm 11**

In a time of great danger the case for flight (verses 1-3) is rejected in favor of the way of trust (1a, 4-7). A Psalm of David, Spurgeon entitled it, “The Song of the Steadfast.”

### **Psalm 12**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Psalm contrasts the false and flattering words of man (verses 1-4) with the flawless and reliable words of the LORD (verses 5-8). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 13**

The psalmist’s experience of circumstances of unrelieved distress evoke the ancient cry of the people of God: “How long, O LORD.” Yet “agitation is brought into the place of intercession and emerges in exultation” (Motyer, 494). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 14**

The psalmist condemns the universal depravity and practical atheism of humanity. Psalm 14 is cited by the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:10-12 in his summary of his case for the necessity of the gospel. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 15**

Psalm 15 describes the practical holiness required of those who would enjoy fellowship with God. Though the righteousness described ultimately is fulfilled only in Christ, the psalmist and we can speak meaningfully of the believer's imperfect fulfillment of these standards and distinguish that from failure to fulfill these standards. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 16**

A Messianic Psalm, a Psalm rich in devotional expression, and a Psalm of David. Verse 10 is frequently cited in the New Testament as prophetic of the resurrection of Christ (e.g. Matthew 22:41-45; Acts 2:31; 13:34-38).

### **Psalm 17**

The superscription entitles Psalm 17 "a prayer of David," reminding us that the Psalter is not only a hymnbook but a prayerbook. The likely setting is 1 Samuel 23:25, when David was surrounded by Saul's men (verse 11). The Psalm is a plea for refuge and vindication.

### **Psalm 18:1-24**

A Psalm of David, which according to the superscription was written on an occasion when "The LORD rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul."

### **Psalm 18:25-50**

David concludes this Psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance from Saul and all his enemies. Verse 49 is cited by the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:9 as prophetic of the day when the Gentiles would "Glorify God for His mercy."

### **Psalm 19**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm praises God for His self-revelation first in creation (verses 1-6), then in Scripture (verses 7-10), and concludes with the soul's response (verses 11-14). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 20**

The occasion of this Psalm may be worship on the eve of battle. It is possible to discern the voice of the priest in verses 1-4,5c, praying on behalf of a warrior/worshiper who has just presented his sacrifice. Verses 5ab, 6-9 are in turn a prayer by the worshiper for victory in battle. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 21**

A royal Psalm in which the king looks back to a victory won in verses 1-7 and looks forward to a future victory in verses 8-12, the latter of which is final and universal. A Psalm of David whose meaning is fulfilled ultimately in the triumph of the Davidic Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 4:1,2; 5:6-14).

### **Psalm 22**

A profound lament. The psalmist complains of abandonment by God, a cry which Jesus made his own on the cross (Matthew 27:46). The suffering about which the psalmist is perplexed and pleads in verses 1-21 results in the universal praise of verses 22-31. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 23**

A Psalm of the shepherd David, who saw in his youthful vocation a metaphor of God's care for His people. It is a Psalm of confidence or trust of one who is walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

### **Psalm 24**

If Psalm 22 is the Psalm of Messiah's *cross*, and Psalm 23 is the Psalm of the Good Shepherd's *crook*, Psalm 24 is the Psalm of the Messiah's *crown*. The earth is His, He is able to stand in the

holy place (verse 3), and for Him the gates of Jerusalem and the gates of heaven shall open. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 25**

The second of seven penitential Psalms (along with Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 130, 143) and an irregular acrostic. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 26**

This vigorous assertion of integrity should be understood not as a claim of sinlessness (see Psalms 6, 32, 51, 130, etc.) but rather as a claim of innocence of the crimes of which others have falsely accused him. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 27**

The 27<sup>th</sup> Psalm, though set in a time of trouble, is rich in devotional language as David expresses his trust and confidence in the LORD and his desire for the LORD, whose beauty he longs to behold and whose face he is eager to seek.

### **Psalm 28**

The troubling, even life-threatening occasion of Psalms 26 and 27 continues as David cries to the LORD, his rock, strength, and refuge, for deliverance from evildoers.

### **Psalm 29**

The 29<sup>th</sup> is a Psalm of the Storm, God's glory being seen in its thunder and lightening. The cadences of the Psalm, even in English, "march to the tune of thunderbolts," as Spurgeon said. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 30**

The occasion of Psalm 30 would appear to be prosperity induced pride which the LORD chastened. A Psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance whose central thought is found in verse 5: *For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.* A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 31**

The 31<sup>st</sup> Psalm is both a plea for deliverance from enemies and bodily afflictions and an expression of strong confidence in God, our rock of strength, our stronghold, our fortress, our guide (verses 2-3), the Sovereign One in whose hands are our times (verse 15). A Psalm of David. It teaches us to pray in the mist of crises, and assures of the efficacy of doing so (Motyer).

### **Psalm 32**

The third of seven penitential Psalms, Luther, Matthew Henry, and Spurgeon have all labeled this an evangelical Psalm, containing the promise of righteousness to those who repent and believe (verses 1,2; cf. Romans 4:6). Perhaps written in the aftermath of David's sin with Bathsheba, it moves from the problem of sin and its resolution through prayer to prayer as the means of solving all of life's problems. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 33**

A Psalm of praise, rejoicing in the LORD for His righteousness and goodness (verses 4,5), for His works of creation (verses 6-9), providence (verses 10-17), and redemption (18-22).

### **Psalm 34**

According to the superscription this Psalm was written when David feigned madness before the Philistine King Abimelech, an incident recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. It is an incomplete and slightly irregular acrostic. Written in a time of crisis, it is a strong affirmation of trust in the LORD.

### **Psalm 35**

The 35<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a cry of the innocent righteous to be delivered from the wicked, avenged, and vindicated. Jesus cited verse 19 to explain the world's unjustified hatred of him (John 15:25). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 36**

Psalm 36 contrasts the evil of the wicked in verses 1-4 with the lavish goodness of God in verses 5-12. Entitled "The Song of Happy Service" by Spurgeon, it is a Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 37:1-20**

An alphabetic acrostic and a wisdom Psalm, the 37<sup>th</sup> urges the people of God not to “fret” about the prosperity of the wicked, for God will destroy them, and the meek shall inherit the earth. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 37:21-40**

David continues to urge the people of God not to fret because of the success of the wicked, but to wait upon the LORD.

### **Psalm 38**

The third of the seven penitential Psalms combines confession of sin with vivid descriptions of its malignant impact upon one’s health and relationships. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 39**

This complaint of God-inflicted suffering that approaches death (verse 4) is at the same time a meditation on the brevity and vanity of human life. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 40**

The 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm may be seen as the fulfillment of the patient waiting of Psalms 38 and 39. The psalmist rejoices in answered prayer (verses 1-5), recommits himself to obedience and public testimony (verses 6-10), and prays for deliverance from continuing troubles (verses 11-17). A Psalm of David, ultimately fulfilled in Christ who alone is able to set aside ritual sacrifices and fulfill the obligations of the law of God (verses 6-8; cf. Hebrews 10:5-7).

### **Psalm 41**

The 41<sup>st</sup> is the Psalm of a righteous man upon his sickbed whose suffering is compounded by the attacks of his enemies and the betrayal of his friends. A Psalm of David whose 9<sup>th</sup> verse was applied by Jesus to Himself in anticipation of Judas’ betrayal (John 13:18).

### **Psalm 42 & 43**

The second of the five books within the Psalter begins with Psalm 42. The 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Psalms were probably originally one Psalm. The refrain of 42:6, repeated in 42:11 and 43:5, divides the two Psalms into 3 equal parts. The psalmist, separated from the place of worship and surrounded by enemies, longs for the presence of God with “an intensity . . . that rebukes our feeble love” (Motyer, 513).

### **Psalm 44**

Motyer entitles Psalm 44, “When life is unfair and God is asleep” (415). The psalmist recalls the past blessing of God (verses 1-8) which he contrasts with his present experience of abandonment and distress which defies explanation or justification (verses 9-26).

### **Psalm 45**

This is a royal Psalm, “a Song of Love,” according to the superscription, and a Messianic Psalm probably written on the occasion of a royal wedding. It presents an idealized picture of the King which clearly looks beyond the sons of David to *the* Son of David. Verses 6 and 7 are quoted in the New Testament to prove the superiority of Christ.

*But of the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. (Hebrews 1:8)*

### **Psalm 46**

Psalm 46 is among the best known and most beloved songs in the Psalter. Sometimes called “Luther’s Psalm,” his Reformation anthem, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” is based upon it. Spurgeon entitles it “The Song of Holy Confidence.”

### **Psalm 47**

Psalm 47 may be associated with the transportation of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6) or with some great military victory. It anticipates the ascension of Christ and the

consummation of His rule over all the nations, even their incorporation as “the people of the God of Abraham” (verse 9).

### **Psalm 48**

Psalm 48 celebrates the beauty of Mt. Zion (verses 1-3), unscathed in the aftermath of its threatened destruction (verses 4-8), secure in God’s love and provision (verses 9-14). It is a Psalm of the church, the true and heavenly Zion (Hebrews 12:22).

### **Psalm 49**

A wisdom Psalm that considers the futility of riches, reminds us, essentially, that we can’t take it with us, that death overtakes rich and poor, wise and foolish alike.

### **Psalm 50**

The 50<sup>th</sup> Psalm is in the prophetic tradition, envisioning all the earth being summoned to God’s judgment seat (verses 1-6) as He rebukes Israel for its religious formalism (verses 7-15) and its hypocrisy (verses 16-23).

### **Psalm 51**

On an occasion of grievous, personal sin, David turns to prayer. The fourth of seven penitential Psalms (along with 6, 25, 32, 38, 130, 143), a Psalm of David, written according to the superscription “when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” The repentance of verses 1-15 is followed in verses 16-19 with acceptable burnt offerings, that is, sacrifice of renewed commitment and religious observance.

### **Psalm 52**

According to the superscription, Psalm 52 was written on the occasion when Doeg the Edomite informed Saul of Ahimelech the priest’s harboring and provisioning the fleeing David (1 Samuel 21:1-9). Saul responded by slaughtering Ahimelech and his whole household by the hand of the same Doeg (1 Samuel 22:8-23). More a wisdom reflection upon the end of wickedness than a prayer, it is a Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 53**

Psalm 53 is almost an exact replica of Psalm 14, a meditation on human depravity. It is cited by the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:10-12 to clinch his argument for the universality of human evil and the need for a Savior. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 54**

At a time of betrayal, David turns to prayer. According to the superscription, this Psalm was written by David when the “Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, ‘Is David not hiding with us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?’” (1 Samuel 23:19ff; 26:1ff). That is, David in his flight from Saul finds himself in Ziph in southern Judah, now betrayed by the men of his own tribe, even though he had previously rescued one of their border towns from the Philistines (1 Samuel 23:1ff). This prayer for vindication should be understood against the background of betrayal and treachery.

### **Psalm 55**

David turns to prayer, morning, noon, and night (verse 17), as he laments persecution by enemies (verses 1-8) and betrayal by friends (verses 12ff; cf. Psalm 41:9). He finds in prayer what is necessary to sustain him (verses 22,23)

### **Psalm 56**

In a moment of crisis, David turns to prayer. According to the superscription, Psalm 56 was written by David “when the Philistines seized him in Gath,” probably the incident recorded in 1 Samuel 21:101-2 when David fled to Gath and feigned insanity in order to escape. Once more in crisis, David turns to prayer, where he finds confidence and hope.

### **Psalm 57**

At a time of great danger, David turns to prayer. According to the superscription this psalm was written by David “when he fled from Saul, in the cave,” probably the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1-4 or perhaps 1 Samuel 24). David seeks refuge in

prayer and sees in the cave divine provision as it becomes for him “the shadow of Your wings” (verse 1) and a place of praise.

### **Psalm 58**

At a time of injustice, David turns to prayer. This psalm is a complaint against unjust judges (or “rulers” as the NIV translates “gods” in verse 1), and a cry for their removal and the establishment of justice. The strong imprecations of verses 6-9 are reserved for those who are irreversibly committed to evil.

### **Psalm 59**

At a time of life-threatening trouble, David turns to prayer. Written, according to the superscription, “when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him,” a trap from which David escaped through an upper room window, aided by his wife Michal (15—19:11ff). David pleads his innocence, for deliverance, and for the destruction of his evil enemies.

### **Psalm 60**

At a time of setback and defeat, David turns to prayer. The superscription associates this Psalm with the victory over Edom “in the valley of Salt” (2 Samuel 8). But apparently there were initial defeats as Edom opportunistically attacked Israel in the south while David and the army were engaged in conflict with the Syrians in the north. David complains of divine rejection (verses 1-3, 9,10), pleas for victory (verses 4,5,11,12), and receive divine assurances of triumph (verses 6-8).

### **Psalm 61**

Psalm 61 is a plea to God to be heard in prayer that expresses strong confidence in God’s protection and care. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 62**

Under attack by enemies who pretend to be friends, David looks in prayer only to God, his rock, salvation, and fortress, for comfort and vindication.

### **Psalm 63**

The superscription places David in the wilderness of Judah, perhaps in flight from Absalom (2 Samuel 15:13ff). His physical deprivations in the desert provide a metaphor for his soul, as he thirsts and yearns for the presence of God, to whom he clings in prayer in the face of mortal danger.

### **Psalm 64**

Attacked by enemies who conspire to destroy him, David turns to God in prayer to protect and preserve his life, confident of the ultimate ruin of the evildoers (verses 7-10).

### **Psalm 65**

The immediate occasion of Psalm 65 would appear to be rain sent by God in answer to prayer, perhaps at a time of drought (verse 9; cf. 2 Samuel 21:1-14). It celebrates both God's work in redemption (verses 1-8) and in the realm of nature (verses 9-13). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 66**

The psalmist summons all the earth to praise God for His mighty redemptive acts in bringing Israel out of Egypt (verses 1-12) and then himself models the worship which he calls others to offer (verses 13-20).

### **Psalm 67**

Sometimes called the "Missionary Psalm," it calls for all peoples and nations to praise God.

### **Psalm 68**

The 68<sup>th</sup> Psalm celebrates the victory of God over His enemies and his fatherly care for His people (e.g. verses 5,6). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 69**

As he sinks in a deep mire and the flood waters overwhelm him, David turns to prayer. Both his zeal for God (verse 9) and his suffering (verse 21) are prophetic of the experience of the Messiah, the Christ.

### **Psalm 70**

Facing mortal danger, David looks to God for help through prayer, in words nearly identical to Psalm 40:13-17.

### **Psalm 71**

Now an older man, the psalmist recalls a lifetime of reliance upon God, and prays for continuing protection from enemies.

### **Psalm 72**

Psalm 72, the last psalm of Book 2 of the Psalter, is a royal Psalm “of Solomon,” according to the superscription, that is, concerning Solomon, a son of David. David’s prayerful aspirations and ideals for Solomon point to a future Messianic Son of David in whom his prayer shall be realized.

### **Psalm 73**

Psalm 73 marks the beginning of Book 3 of the Psalter (Psalms 73-83). The psalmist describes his struggle with reconciling the justice of God with the prosperity of the wicked (verses 1-16), an incongruity resolved only when in the presence of God he perceives their end (verses 17-28).

### **Psalm 74**

Psalm 74 is a lament for the destruction of the temple, probably written in the immediate aftermath of the Babylonian conquest in 586BC.

### **Psalm 75**

The psalmist gives thanks for the certainty and equity of God’s judgment.

### **Psalm 76**

The psalmist celebrates God’s past and future victories over His enemies.

### **Psalm 77**

Profoundly disturbed, the psalmist finds no comfort in God. Yet he returns again to the place of prayer, remembers the LORD’S wonders of old, and finds cause for hope.

### **Psalm 78: 1-18**

The psalmist recalls the events of the exodus and wilderness wandering in response to his opening admonition to “tell the congregation the glorious deeds of the Lord,” to the end that “they shall not be like their fathers, as stubborn and rebellious generation” (verses 4, 8).

### **Psalm 78:39-72**

The psalmist continues his review of the events of the exodus and wilderness wandering, highlighting God’s mighty work and Israel’s unbelief and disobedience, to the end that the “coming generation” not repeat the mistakes of their fathers (verses 1-8).

### **Psalm 79**

The destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 587 is the occasion of the ancient lament, “how long, O Lord?” (verse 5).

### **Psalm 80**

The psalmist addresses God as Shepherd (verses 1-6) and Vinedresser (verses 7-19) and the people of God as flock and vine at a time of divine rejection and national devastation. The heart of his prayer may be found in the refrain thrice repeated: “O God, restore us, and cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved” (see also verses 7,19).

### **Psalm 81**

The feast (verse 3) which provides the occasion of this Psalm could be either Passover (Exodus 12:18) or Booths (Lev. 23:29), both of which are essentially “exodus remembrances” (Motyer 538). The people of God are bidden to praise God (verses 1-5a). The voice shifts to the first person singular in verses 5b-14 as God reminds His people of his law and promises and their unbelief.

### **Psalm 82**

The psalmist summons all rulers and authorities to exercise justice without partiality.

### **Psalm 83**

Threatened by loud and allied enemies (listed in verses 6-8), the psalmist pleads that God break his silence and intervene as He had in times past (verses 9-11).

### **Psalm 84**

The psalmist yearns for the presence of God which he experienced in connection with the temple and which parallels in experience in the assembly of the saints. Spurgeon entitled it “the Pearl of the Psalms.”

### **Psalm 85**

*Past* mercies are remembered as the people of God suffer under God’s *present* judgments and pray for *future* blessings. The psalmist anticipates a day when “righteousness and peace kiss,” a promise realized in Christ.

### **Psalm 86**

At a time of trouble, David turns to prayer (verses 1-7), combining praise (verses 8-10), teachability (verse 11), thanksgiving (verses 12, 13), and petition for deliverance (verses 14-17).

### **Psalm 87**

Psalm 87 celebrates Zion, or Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God, and anticipates the inclusion of the nations, even of Israel’s ancient enemies (verse 4) as among her inhabitants.

### **Psalm 88**

The most despairing of all the Psalms, the psalmist complains both that he suffers as a result of God’s immediate agency and at the same time God refuses to hear his pleas for help. Aside from the invocation (verse 1), the Psalm ends where it begins in unresolved anguish, and yet, in the place of prayer.

### **Psalm 89:1-29**

The 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm divides into two distinct sections. Verses 1-37 celebrate the righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, and faithfulness of God in establishing both the created order and especially in establishing the covenant with David and his

descendants. Yet, in verses 38-52, he complains that God has removed that covenant with David and pleads for its restoration.

### **Psalm 89:30-52**

This second reading of Psalm 89 continues in verses 30-37, the celebration of God's faithfulness in establishing a permanent covenant with David and his descendants, but begins in verse 38 to the end to complain that God seems to have abandoned that covenant and pleads for its restoration. When the promises of God and the circumstances of life seem to contradict, the psalmist turns to the place of prayer.

### **Psalm 90**

As to the superscription this is "a prayer of Moses, the man of God." An extended meditation on man's mortality and God's eternity, the setting may well be Moses's own generation, doomed to wander in the wilderness. Psalm 90 is the first Psalm of Book Four of the Psalter (Psalms 90-106).

### **Psalm 91**

A Psalm of trust whose original setting may have been the battlefield. The psalmist finds safety in the LORD who is a shelter, refuge, fortress, shield, buckler, and dwelling place. The LORD like a mother bird covers him with her pinons and hides him under her wings. Note that the voice shifts to the first person in verses 14-16, as God pledges to guard his loyal servant, a promise fulfilled supremely in Christ (see especially verses 11-12).

### **Psalm 92**

The psalmist contrasts the righteous who delight in singing the praises of God and in contemplating His works with the uncomprehending wicked who are doomed to perish.

### **Psalm 93**

This short Psalm is the first in a group of Psalms (93-100) that celebrates the LORD'S reign as King.

## **Psalm 94**

The psalmist calls upon the LORD to execute just vengeance upon the wicked.

## **Psalm 95**

The 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a call to worship the LORD, the creator and possessor of all (verses 1-7a); yet it closes a warning to hear His voice (verses 7b-11).

## **Psalm 96**

A royal Psalm, the 96<sup>th</sup> Psalm calls all the earth, all the nations, all families, and all peoples to sing praises to the LORD.

## **Psalm 97**

A royal Psalm, the 97<sup>th</sup> Psalm calls on all the earth to acknowledge the LORD'S righteous reign.

## **Psalm 98**

A royal Psalm, the 98<sup>th</sup> Psalm calls upon the earth to sing praises to the LORD for His salvation, His rule and His coming judgment.

## **Psalm 99**

A royal Psalm, the 99<sup>th</sup> Psalm calls upon all the peoples of the earth to praise the LORD God, emphasizing in particular His holiness, as repeated three times in the refrain.

## **Psalm 100**

A royal Psalm, identified in the superscription as "a psalm for giving thanks," the 100<sup>th</sup> calls upon all the earth to sing the LORD'S praises. Note that the worship of God begins with sung thanksgiving and praise.

## **Psalm 101**

A royal psalm and a Psalm of David, the king pledges a life of personal obedience and to root out evil from his kingdom, a promise which the son of David, Jesus Christ, alone can fulfill.

### **Psalm 102**

A royal Psalm, recognizing the LORD as “enthroned forever” (verse 12), yet one which according to the superscription is a “a prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the Lord.”

### **Psalm 103**

A Psalm of thanksgiving for the benefits of redemption.

### **Psalm 104**

A Psalm of praise for God’s work of creation and providence.

### **Psalm 105**

Whereas Psalm 104 praises God for creation and providence, Psalm 105 praises God for redemption, recalling Israel’s history from Abraham through the exodus.

### **Psalm 106**

Psalm 106 recalls the exodus and wilderness wandering, contrasting Israel’s unbelief and sin with the LORD’S lovingkindness and faithfulness.

### **Psalm 107**

The 107<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a Psalm of thanksgiving for the LORD’S lovingkindness (*hesed*) in rescuing his people from various kinds of trouble: captivity (verse 3), deprivations of the desert (verses 4-9), imprisonment (verses 10-16), foolishness (verses 17-22), and storms at sea (verses 23-32).

### **Psalm 108**

Psalm 108 is composed of two previous Psalms, 57:7-11 and 60:5-12, with only minor variations. The places named in verses 7-8 are cited as a means of indicating dominion over the whole land of Israel, and in verse 9 Moab, Edom and Philistia are Israel’s principal enemies over which victory is promised.

### **Psalm 109**

Falsely accused before a corrupt court, the psalmist prays for a reversal of roles and of intended outcomes and the imposition of divine justice. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 110**

Among the most clearly Messianic of psalms and most frequently cited in the New Testament, its original composition may have been at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem (or Zion, verse 2), when David would have inherited the royal tithes of Jerusalem's kings, including the priesthood "according to the order of Melchizedek (verse 4). Finally, though, David looks beyond himself to his greater son, Jesus, the Messiah.

### **Psalm 111**

The 111<sup>th</sup> is a psalm of praise for God's redemptive works. It is also an acrostic psalm, each of 22 lines starting with the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

### **Psalm 112**

Like Psalm 111, Psalm 112 is an acrostic psalm, but whereas the theme of the 111<sup>th</sup> is the *works* of God, the theme of the 112<sup>th</sup> is the *man* of God.

### **Psalm 113**

The 113<sup>th</sup> praises God both for his transcendence (verses 1-6), and His presence with His people (verses 7-9). This is the first of what is called the "Egyptian Hallel," that is, the psalms of praise sung in connection with the Passover observance (Psalm 113-118), undoubtedly sung by Jesus and the disciples at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26).

### **Psalm 114**

Using subtle, poetic imagery, the second of the "Egyptian Hallel" describes the power of God's self-manifestation in the exodus.

### **Psalm 115**

The third of the psalms of the "Egyptian Hallel," Psalm 115 calls upon worshippers to glorify God and forsake idols.

### **Psalm 116**

The fourth psalm of the "Egyptian Hallel," Psalm 116 is a psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance from death to which the psalmist responds with praise and with sacrificial offerings.

### **Psalm 117**

The shortest of the psalms and the shortest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 117 calls the nations to worship the Lord (see also Psalm 15:7-11).

### **Psalm 118**

The last of the “Egyptian Hallel” (Psalms 113-118), Psalm 118 was used in connection with the conclusion of Passover observance and so, most suitably, is among the most clearly Messianic of the Psalms. Jesus may have concluded the Last Supper with the singing of this Psalm (Mark 14:26).

### **Psalm 119**

The longest psalm and largest chapter in the Bible. It is divided into 22 stanzas, each designated alphabetically by the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The eight lines of each section begins with the same letter. Eight words are used to express the psalm’s central theme: law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances and the word.

#### **Psalm 119:1-16 (Aleph and Beth)**

Each line of verses 1-8 begins with the first Hebrew letter, Aleph; each line of verses 9-16 begins with the second Hebrew letter, Beth. The psalmist commends meditation upon God’s word.

#### **Psalm 119:17-32 (Gimel and Daleth)**

Each line of verses 17-24 begins with the third letter, Gimel; each line of verses 25-32 begins with the fourth Hebrew letter, Daleth. The psalmist yearns to know God’s law.

#### **Psalm 119:33-48 (He and Waw)**

Each line of verses 33-40 begins with the fifth letter, He; each line of verses 41-48 begins with the sixth Hebrew letter, Waw. The psalmist prays for understanding of God’s commandments.

### **Psalm 119:49-64 (Zayin and Heth)**

Each line of verses 49-56 begins with the seventh letter, Teth; each line of verses 57-64 begins with the eighth Hebrew letter, Heth. The psalmist is comforted by God's word.

### **Psalm 119:65-80 (Teth and Yodh)**

Each line of verses 65-72 begins with the ninth letter, Teth; each line of verses 73-80 begins with the tenth Hebrew letter, Yodh. The psalmist perceives how affliction has intensified his desire to know and keep God's word.

### **Psalm 119:81-96 (Kaph and Lamedh)**

Each line of verses 81-88 begins with the eleventh letter, Teth; each line of verses 89-96 begins with the twelfth Hebrew letter, Lamedh. Through persecution and suffering, the psalmist is sustained by God's word.

### **Psalm 119:97-112 (Mem and Nun)**

Each line of verses 97-104 begins with the thirteenth letter, Mem; each line of verses 105-112 begins with the fourteenth Hebrew letter, Nun. God's word makes us wiser than our teachers; it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

### **Psalm 119:113-128 (Samekh and Ayin)**

Each line of verses 113-120 begins with the fifteenth letter, Samekh; each line of verses 121-128 begins with the sixteenth Hebrew letter, Ayin. God's word upholds the righteous in their conflicts with the wicked.

### **Psalm 119:129-144 (Pe and Tsadhe)**

Each line of verses 129-136 begins with the sixteenth letter, Pe; each line of verses 137-144 begins with the seventeenth Hebrew letter, Tsadhe. God's law imparts light and understanding; it is righteous and true.

### **Psalm 119:145-160 (Qoph and Resh)**

Each line of verses 145-152 begins with the eighteenth letter, Qoph; each line of verses 153-160 begins with the nineteenth

Hebrew letter, Resh. The psalmist rises early that he may meditate upon God's law.

### **Psalm 119:161-176 (Sin, Shin, and Taw)**

Each line of verses 161-168 begins with the twentieth and twenty-first letters, Sin and Shin; each line of verses 169-176 begins with the twenty-second Hebrew letter, Taw. The psalmist loves and delights in God's law.

### **Psalm 120**

Psalms 120-134 form another collection of psalms (see Psalms 113-118, the Egyptian Hallel) known as "the Songs of Ascents." These were believed to be psalms sung by pilgrims at festival times on their way up to Jerusalem, Mount Zion. The collection begins with the pilgrim far from Zion, symbolically at least, in Meshech in Asia Minor, and in Kedar in Arabia, where he encounters the opposition of the ungodly.

### **Psalm 121**

The second of the fifteen "Song of Ascents," the pilgrim looks for help to the hills of Zion, to Jerusalem, and the LORD who never sleeps or slumbers.

### **Psalm 122**

The third of the fifteen "Song of Ascents," the pilgrim rejoices as he arrives at the gates of Jerusalem, most prized of cities, location of the house of the LORD.

### **Psalm 123**

The fourth of the "Song of Ascents," the pilgrim lifts his eyes from the hills of Zion (Psalm 121) and God's throne in the temple (Psalm 122) to God's true throne in the heavens (Psalm 145:8-27), from where he looks expectantly for mercy.

### **Psalm 124**

The fifth of the "Songs of Ascents," that is, psalms sung by pilgrims traveling up to Jerusalem at festival time. It is a psalm of thanksgiving to God for deliverance from the dangers of

earthquake (3b), flood (4a), beast of prey (6), and fowler (7). A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 125**

The sixth of the “Song of Ascents” likens the safety of the people of God to the stability of Mount Zion, the LORD surrounding His people even as the mountains surround Jerusalem.

### **Psalm 126**

The seventh of the “Song of Ascents,” the psalmist recalls with gratitude an occasion when the LORD suddenly and unexpectedly delivered Jerusalem (Zion) from some great ordeal.

### **Psalm 127**

The eighth “song of Ascents,” is “of Solomon,” and therefore either “written by” or “concerning” Solomon, warns of the futility of human endeavors, whether building a house, guarding a city, or earning a living (verses 1, 2).

### **Psalm 128**

The ninth “song of Ascents,” the 128<sup>th</sup> Psalm continues the theme begun at the end of Psalm 127, of the blessings that flow from Mount Zion (Jerusalem): fruitful labor, a fruitful marriage, and long life.

### **Psalm 129**

The tenth “song of Ascents,” Psalm 129 curses those who have afflicted Israel and who hate Mount Zion to which the pilgrims are journeying.

### **Psalm 130**

The eleventh “song of Ascents,” Psalm 130, like Psalm 129, is a prayer that arises out of great suffering. But this time the psalmist looks not outward to enemies as the cause, but inward to his own sin. This is also the sixth of the “penitential psalms.”

### **Psalm 131**

The twelfth “song of Ascents,” the pilgrim likens his heart in relation to God to that of a weaned child, contented and at rest with his mother.

### **Psalm 132**

The thirteenth “song of Ascents” the pilgrim recalls the promises that God’s presence would be known in the temple and that David’s descendants would rule from Zion forever, a promise fulfilled in Christ.

### **Psalm 133**

The fourteenth “song of Ascents” is a prayer by the pilgrim for unity and refreshing fellowship among those worshipping at Zion.

### **Psalm 134**

The fifteenth and final “song of Ascents,” is a call to worship, the pilgrims calling the priests to “bless the LORD” (verses 1, 2) who in turn bless the assembled worshipers (verse 3).

### **Psalm 135**

Psalm 135 is a hymn of praise for God’s works of creation, providence, and redemption.

### **Psalm 136**

The 136<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving which traces God’s works from creation (verses 1-9) to the exodus redemption (verses 10-22) to the present (verses 23-26).

### **Psalm 137**

Written from the exile in Babylon after 587 BC, the psalmist yearns to return to Jerusalem (verses 1-6) and pronounces bitter imprecations against the enemies of Zion (verses 7-9).

### **Psalm 138**

The first of eight Psalms of David, Psalm 138 is a hymn of thanksgiving for answered prayers (verse 3).

### **Psalm 139**

David explores the personal implications of God's omniscience and omnipresence.

### **Psalm 140**

Psalm 140 is a plea for protection from the evil intentions of one's enemies. A Psalm of David.

### **Psalm 141**

David prays that the LORD will restrain his own evil inclinations as he seeks protection from the traps laid by the wicked. Note that David orders his prayer life according to the pattern of the temple sacrifices and understands its spirituality (verse 2).

### **Psalm 142**

According to the superscription, Psalm 142, like Psalm 57, was written by David "when he was in the cave," hiding from Saul (see especially 1 Samuel 22:1; 24:3). At this time of life-threatening danger, David turns to prayer.

### **Psalm 143**

The last of the "penitential psalms" (see also 6, 25, 32, 51, 130, 138,), David pleads for mercy, guidance, and deliverance at a time of mortal danger.

### **Psalm 144**

Set in the midst of conflict, Psalm 144 at once looks back to past victories (verses 1-4), pleads for present deliverance (verses 5-11) and prays for future prosperity (verses 12-15). A psalm of David.

### **Psalm 145**

The superscription of Psalm 145 calls it "a song of praise." It is an acrostic psalm, each line beginning with the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, minus the letter nun. A psalm of David.

### **Psalm 146**

The last five psalms begin with the word, "Hallelujah," or "praise the Lord" and so have been called the "Great Hallel."

bringing the psalter to a close with a crescendo of praise. Psalm 146 praises the Lord's trustworthiness.

### **Psalm 147**

The second of the psalms of the "Great Hallel," the setting of Psalm 147 may be the post-exile period in which Jerusalem was being rebuilt. It extols the greatness of God.

### **Psalm 148**

The third of the psalms of the "Great Hallel," Psalm 148 calls upon all creation to "praise the Lord."

### **Psalm 149**

The fourth psalm of the "Great Hallel," verses 6-9 suggest a martial setting, perhaps as a song sung in celebration of a military victory. Like Psalm 148, it is a summons to worship.

### **Psalm 150**

The fifth and final psalm of the "Great Hallel," it brings the Psalter's crescendo of praise to a climatic summons to "praise the LORD."



### **Author**

Authorship of the collection of wise sayings that we call Proverbs is attributed to Solomon (1:1; 10:1; 25:10), to Agur (chapter 30) and Lemuel (chapter 31). Though Solomon wrote and spoke many proverbs, his role may have been more one of leadership in initiating their compilation (cf. 1 Kings 4:29-34).

### **Date & Occasion**

It is impossible to give the book of Proverbs a definitive date through the scholars though nothing requires that it have reached its present form prior to the Exile (587 B.C.).

### **Message**

Proverbs teaches us God's truth not so much by way of commandment as by wise observation. Wisdom, according to Proverbs, is understanding the nature of things and acting accordingly. Wisdom is found in understanding the nature of God, the nature of the created order, the nature of human relations, and the nature of a given occasion and choosing behavior or the path that is suited or corresponds to the reality discerned. According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God incarnate (1 Corinthians 1:24). In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2,3).

### **Proverbs 1:1-19**

Chapter 1 begins a long section which extends to the end of chapter 9, which might be subtitled "wisdom's instructions." These instructions are a preface to the one sentence proverbial sayings which make up most of the rest of the collection (Chapters 10-22; 25-29). Verses 1-7 are a sort of "prologue" providing the purpose of the entire collection and verses 8-19 a warning regarding the enticement of sinners who would lead one to forsake wisdom.

## **Proverbs 1:20-33**

Wisdom's call to the foolish and warning to heed her counsel before it's too late.

## **Proverbs 2**

The value of wisdom in guiding one in the ways of God and righteousness and guarding one from evil.

## **Proverbs 3**

A father instructs his son to trust in the LORD with all his heart.

## **Proverbs 4**

A father instructs his sons to get wisdom and to walk in its way.

## **Proverbs 5**

A father warns his son against immorality.

## **Proverbs 6**

A father's practical warnings against debt, sloth, and adultery.

## **Proverbs 7**

A father commends wisdom as a guard against the adulteress.

## **Proverbs 8**

Wisdom is personified as calling to the simple to come to it and learn. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this portrait of wisdom personified (1 Corinthians 1:24; Colossians 1:15,16; Hebrews 1:1-4).

## **Proverbs 9**

Wisdom and folly are both portrayed as women extending invitations to enter their homes and partake of their food, wisdom's leading to insight, folly's to death.

## **Proverbs 10**

Proverbs 10:1–22:10 consists mainly of single-sentence proverbial sayings based upon observation and experience. Chapter 10 consists mostly of paired opposites, contrasting the wise and the foolish, the righteous and the wicked.

### **Proverbs 11**

Proverbial sayings which contrast the ways of the wicked and righteous.

### **Proverbs 12**

Proverbial sayings which contrast the ways of the wicked and righteous.

### **Proverbs 13**

Proverbial sayings which contrast the ways of the wicked and righteous.

### **Proverbs 14**

Proverbial sayings which contrast the ways of the wicked and righteous.

### **Proverbs 15**

Wise observations are made and the ways of the righteous and wicked are contrasted.

### **Proverbs 16**

The path of wisdom is related to a right understanding fo the ways of God.

### **Proverbs 17**

The way of wisdom is identified not so much by commands but observations of the way things work in God's world.

### **Proverbs 18**

The writer describes the ways of the foolish and makes wise observations about how things work in the world.

### **Proverbs 19**

Wise observations about life are made and the ways of the righteous and wicked are contrasted.

### **Proverbs 20**

Wise observations about life are made and the ways of the righteous and wicked are contrasted.

## **Proverbs 21**

Wise observations about life are made and the ways of the righteous and wicked are contrasted.

## **Proverbs 22**

The contrasting pairs which have compared the wise and the foolish which have been featured since Proverbs 10:1 give way at 22:16 to wise counsel touching many areas of life, which this section continues through Proverbs 24:22 and is designated the “Proverbs of Solomon.”

## **Proverbs 23**

Wise instruction touching many areas of life continues.

## **Proverbs 24**

The wise counsel of the “Proverbs of Solomon” continue to verse 22, where they give way to the “sayings of the wise.”

## **Proverbs 25**

More proverbs of Solomon are found in chapters 25–29, joining those of 10–22:16 apparently recovered during Hezekiah’s reign in Judah (715–686 B.C.) and recorded for posterity.

## **Proverbs 26**

Wise counsel regarding touching a variety of circumstances.

## **Proverbs 27**

Wise instruction regarding a range of issues.

## **Proverbs 28**

Wise observations regarding the righteous and the wicked, frequently touching wealth and poverty.

## **Proverbs 29**

The wise and foolish, the righteous and wicked, are contrasted, particularly as applies to the dealings of a ruler.

### **Proverbs 30**

Proverbs 30 records the wise sayings of Agur, the son of Jakeh. His identity is unknown. As with the preceding chapters, his proverbs are based on wise observations as to how things work in God's world.

### **Proverbs 31**

Proverbs 31 records the wise sayings of an unknown King Lemuel as taught to him by his mother. They are designed to equip a prince for the task of ruling righteously and include the importance of finding "an excellent wife." The book of Proverbs concludes where it began, with the "fear of God" as the foundation of all wisdom (1:7; 31:30).



## **Ecclesiastes**

### **Author**

The author is identified as “The Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem” (1:12). Traditionally this has been interpreted as indicating Solomon, which fits well with the descriptions of his unsurpassed wisdom (1:16) and unrivaled wealth (2:4-9). Others, however, have argued that Ecclesiastes was authored in a later time by a different author writing in the wisdom tradition of Solomon.

### **Date & Occasion**

If written by Solomon, it would date sometime during the years of his reign (970–93 B.C.). If a later date, the scholars speculate a time after the Hebrew exile in Babylon, late in the 6<sup>th</sup> century or early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Its aim is to demonstrate through experience that meaning and satisfaction in life comes only through faith in God.

### **Message**

The “preacher,” *Qoheleth* (Hebrew) or *Ecclesiastes* (Greek) looks at life “under the sun” or “on earth,” that is, life without reference to God or eternity and concludes “all is vanity” and “striving after the wind.” The believer’s response to the experience of injustice, meaninglessness, and futility in this world is to work hard, enjoy life, and trust God, knowing that in Christ our labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

### **Ecclesiastes 1**

The futility of life, work, and wisdom in an existence which terminates in death.

### **Ecclesiastes 2**

The futility of pleasure, possessions, accomplishments, and wisdom in light of death (verses 1-23); and the consequent priority of common pleasures (verses 24-26).

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

There is an appropriate time for every human activity (verses 1-8); the priority of eating and drinking and enjoying one's work even in light of eternity and the unknown (verses 9-22).

### **Ecclesiastes 4**

The futility of life under the sun.

### **Ecclesiastes 5**

The fear of God, the futility of accumulated riches, and the priority of common pleasures.

### **Ecclesiastes 6**

The futility of riches and worldly honor.

### **Ecclesiastes 7:1-14**

Proverbial sayings contrasting wisdom and folly.

### **Ecclesiastes 7:15-29**

Observations about the way of wisdom in this world.

### **Ecclesiastes 8**

Wisdom commended and its limits recognized.

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

Given the inescapable reality of death, enjoyment of common pleasures of life is urged.

### **Ecclesiastes 10**

Wisdom and folly are contrasted.

### **Ecclesiastes 11**

Wise counsel concerning a variety of circumstances.

### **Ecclesiastes 12**

Fear God and keep His commands from the days of one's youth.

## **Song of Solomon**

### **Author**

The traditional view is that Solomon is the author of the song that bears his name. But since the phrase “of Solomon” can mean “by Solomon” or “for Solomon,” the author cannot be identified with certainty.

### **Date & Occasion**

If written by Solomon it would have been written in the mid-10th century B.C. Otherwise both the date and occasion are difficult to identify. At one level it is a celebration of martial love and intimacy. At another level it has been interpreted as an allegory of Christ’s love for His bride, the church, the people of God (cf. Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 12:14-20; Ephesians 5:22ff). It has been known variously as “Song of Solomon,” “Song of Songs,” and “Canticles” (from the Latin word for “song”).

### **Message**

The love celebrated in Song of Solomon is characterized by sacrifice, desire, and commitment. It is written in verse with rich imagery and highly sensual language. It has been described as a “rhapsody of love” and a “romantic fantasy.” It provides a beautiful picture of the pain, longing, and pleasure of marital intimacy, best understood as that between country girl and her shepherd groom.

### **Song of Solomon 1**

The bride confesses her love for her shepherd-groom (whom she imagines to be a king) and he his love for her.

### **Song of Solomon 2**

The bride likens herself to a “rose of sharon,” that is, a wildflower, and imagines a rendezvous with her shepherd-groom, whom she likens to a gazelle.

### **Song of Solomon 3**

The bride dreams of the consummation of her love, and of her wedding day, which she imagines as a royal occasion, and her groom as the magnificent Solomon.

### **Song of Solomon 4**

The groom praises the beauty of his bride, now inaccessible to him.

### **Song of Solomon 5**

The bride first dreams of a rendezvous with her groom in a garden of love, but awakens to realize he is not to be found, as the dream turns into a nightmare of separation.

### **Song of Solomon 6**

The shepherd-groom and his bride express their delight in each other.

### **Song of Solomon 7**

The groom continues to express delight in his bride (verses 1-7) and they imagine the consummation of their love (verses 8-13).

### **Song of Solomon 8**

The longing of love, as yet unconsummated, is once more expressed (verses 1-7). The song ends with final memories and concluding counsel.

## Introduction to the Prophets

Isaiah is the first book in a section of the Bible known as the “Prophets,” that stretches from Isaiah all the way to the end of the Old Testament. Traditionally they are divided into two sections. First, the five “major prophets” (“major” not because of importance but large size): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Second, the twelve “minor prophets” (“minor,” not because of unimportance but relative small size): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The prophets were the mouthpiece of God (cf. Exodus 4:12-16; 7:1,2). Their work can be divided into three main periods.

1. *The early non-writing prophets* (pre-8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.): Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha may serve as prominent examples.
2. *The pre-exilic prophets* (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.) who prophesied around the two great crises of this period: the fall of Israel to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah); and the fall of Judah to the Babylonians (Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah).
3. *The exile and post-exilic prophets* (4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries) who prophesied during the exile (Ezra and Daniel) and during the period of the restoration to Canaan (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi).

Through the prophets God called the people of God to repentance and faithfulness, and encouraged their faith and hope. They were silent from Malachi until John the Baptist, who served as forerunner to the Great and Final Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3).



## Author

Isaiah was called to a prophetic ministry and ministered in Judah for 40 years. He was aristocratic by birth, well-educated and well-connected. He was married and a father of several children. Whereas Jeremiah was a reluctant, even a “weeping” prophet, Isaiah seemed to have been eager, even to have loved his calling: “Here am I, send me” (6:3). According to tradition he was martyred by being sawn in two.

## Date & Occasion

The opening verse of Isaiah tells us that Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of the Judean Kings Uzziah (d. 740 B.C.), Jothan (750–731 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (729–686 B.C.). This was a time of threatening Assyrian imperialism and Judean unfaithfulness, of the northern kingdom’s destruction (722 B.C.) and the southern kingdom’s narrow escape.

## Message

Isaiah’s message is one of judgment and hope. The first half (chapters 1-35) is mainly about God’s judgment of Israel through the Assyrian invaders. The second half (chapters 40-66, with chapters 36-39 as a bridge between the two sections) is mainly about hope: hope of return from exile, of the destruction of their enemies (chapters 46, 47), and of salvation through a coming Servant of the LORD (chapters 42ff), who would bring justice and light to the Gentiles (chapters 42, 49) and take away sin and guilt (52:13–53:12), fulfilled through our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36).

## Isaiah 1:1-9

Isaiah 1–5 serves as a sort of preface to the whole book, leading up to chapter 6 and Isaiah’s call. It introduces all the major themes. Chapter 1:1-9, the wickedness of Judah is denounced.

### **Isaiah 1:10-31**

The LORD declares His hatred of liturgical correctness joined to unrighteousness, of religious ritual without moral reform.

### **Isaiah 2**

Isaiah prophesies of a glorious future when the nations shall come to Zion to be instructed in the ways of the God of Jacob (verses 1-6) and when the haughty and proud shall be humbled.

### **Isaiah 3:1-4:1**

The LORD's judgment upon Judah: a dearth of leadership and the devastation of its women.

### **Isaiah 4:2-5:7**

The LORD's branch and the LORD's vineyard.

### **Isaiah 5:8-30**

Six woes are pronounced against Israel for greed, drunkenness, and other sins.

### **Isaiah 6**

Isaiah's vision of God and call to the ministry, 740 B.C.

### **Isaiah 7**

Chapters 7-11 are set in the context of a military alliance of Syria and Israel against Judah. Isaiah reassures a terrified Ahaz that they shall not succeed, that Judah shall be spared, ultimately by the Messiah, Immanuel (see Matthew 1:22, 23).

### **Isaiah 8**

Isaiah prophesies of the coming Assyrian invasion.

### **Isaiah 9:1-7**

The LORD promises that one day deliverance will come for the people of God through the Prince of Peace.

### **Isaiah 9:8–10:4**

The LORD's judgment upon the northern kingdom Israel, called Ephraim, and its capital, Samaria.

### **Isaiah 10:5-19**

Assyria, though like a rod in the hand of God, shall be destroyed for its arrogance.

### **Isaiah 10:20-34**

The LORD promises that a remnant of Israel will survive the Assyrian's onslaught and return.

### **Isaiah 11**

Though the Davidic tree is but a stump, from it shall come the righteous Messiah, His "peaceable kingdom," and a reconstituted Israel.

### **Isaiah 12**

The second Exodus announced in chapter 11 will be accompanied by a new hymn., corresponding to the Song of Moses, sung at the first Exodus (Exodus 15).

### **Isaiah 13**

Chapters 13-23 record a series of oracles directed at the nations beginning with Babylon and Assyria, the great empires and centers of culture.

### **Isaiah 14:1-23**

Isaiah continues his oracle of Babylon's destruction when the day of the Lord comes.

### **Isaiah 14:24-32**

Oracles against Assyria and Philistia, the latter, Israel's ancient enemy.

### **Isaiah 15**

Oracle against Moab, Israel's neighbor east of the Dead Sea.

## **Isaiah 16**

Isaiah concludes his oracle against Moab.

## **Isaiah 17**

Oracle against Damascus, capital city of Syria.

## **Isaiah 18**

Oracle against Cush, that is, the region of southern Egypt and beyond, extending to Ethiopia.

## **Isaiah 19**

Oracle concerning Egypt, its judgment (verses 1-15) and its blessing (verses 16-25).

## **Isaiah 20**

The setting of chapter 20 is in 711 B.C., at the time that the Philistine city of Ashdod rebelled against Assyria and was crushed by Sargon. Isaiah delivers an enacted parable of nakedness and grief, representing the coming destruction of Egypt and Cush (southern Egypt to Ethiopia, Nubia), fulfilled by Assyrian King Esarhaddon in 671 B.C.

## **Isaiah 21**

An oracle of the fall of Babylon, concerning Dumah and Arabia.

## **Isaiah 22**

An oracle of judgment concerning the “valley of vision,” that is, Jerusalem, because it has forgotten God.

## **Isaiah 23**

An oracle concerning Tyre, a major commercial port north of Israel, and Sidon, another prominent Phoenician port (“ships of Tarshish” were ships capable of sailing to Tarshish, regarded as the ends of the earth [verse 1]). This ends the section which began in chapter 11 recording the oracles concerning the nations.

### **Isaiah 24**

Chapters 24-27 are sometimes called the “little apocalypse,” as Isaiah describes the day of the LORD as a time of judgment (chapter 24), and redemption (chapters 25-27).

### **Isaiah 25**

God’s triumph over His enemies and rescue of His people is celebrated.

### **Isaiah 26**

A song of redemption in celebration of God’s salvation is sung.

### **Isaiah 27**

The future restoration of Israel is promised.

### **Isaiah 28:1-14**

Chapters 25-35 continue the theme of judgment and salvation. In chapter 28 judgment is pronounced on Ephraim on the occasion of its fall to the Assyrians (722 B.C.).

### **Isaiah 28:15-29**

Isaiah prophesies of Israel’s coming redemption through “a precious cornerstone,” a promise fulfilled ultimately in Jesus Christ (cf. Psalm 118:22; Romans 9:33, 10:4; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-8).

### **Isaiah 29:1-14**

An oracle of woe against Jerusalem, anticipating the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

### **Isaiah 29:15-24**

An oracle of woe against Jerusalem’s sages.

### **Isaiah 30:1-17**

Oracles of woe against those who seek help from Egypt rather than from the LORD.

### **Isaiah 30:18-33**

Though judgment is coming, yet the LORD will bind up the brokenness of His people and heal their wounds.

### **Isaiah 31**

An oracle of woe against those who trust in warriors and weapons instead of God.

### **Isaiah 32**

The rule of the righteous king is described (verses 1-18) and complacent women are warned of impending disaster (verses 9-20).

### **Isaiah 33**

The sixth and final oracle of woe of this section (chapters 28-33) is directed against Assyria, whose destruction will be Israel's restoration and the LORD's exaltation.

### **Isaiah 34**

The day of the LORD shall be a day of destruction for the nations, represented by Edom, Israel's ancestral enemy.

### **Isaiah 35**

The redemption, return, and transformation of Israel is described, a promise fulfilled through the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:2-6, 12:22; Mark 7:37; Luke 7:21, 22).

### **Isaiah 36**

Chapters 36-39 are an historical bridge connecting the two halves of Isaiah, chapters 1-35 and 44-66. They record the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, that the Assyrians would surround Jerusalem but that the LORD would then deliver a remnant of His people by destroying the besieging army. The narrative begins about 715 B.C. Much of this content can also be found in 2 Kings 18:13–20:19.

### **Isaiah 37:1-20**

Isaiah's reassurance and King Hezekiah's prayer that Jerusalem shall not fall to the Assyrian army.

### **Isaiah 37:21-38**

The LORD destroys the Assyrian army and its King Sennacherib.

### **Isaiah 38**

The LORD extends Hezekiah's life.

### **Isaiah 39**

Envoys from Babylon come to Jerusalem seeking support in their rebellion against Assyria. Hezekiah foolishly shows them his arms and wealth.

### **Isaiah 40:1-7**

Chapters 40-55 from the final section of the book of Isaiah. Originally addressed to those taken captive and exiled in a foreign land, they promise rescue and restoration that finally will come through God's suffering Servant, the Messiah. In verses 1-7 Isaiah proclaims comfort for the people of God and prophecies of a voice that will cry in the wilderness, a prophecy fulfilled by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3, 4; Luke 1:76; 3:4,5; John 1:23).

### **Isaiah 40:9-31**

The incomparable greatness of the Lord God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

### **Isaiah 41**

The people of God are promised the help of their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, who is contrasted with worthless idols.

### **Isaiah 42**

Chapter 42 presents the first of four "Servant Songs" found in chapters 40-55, celebrating the Servant of the LORD, the Messiah.

## **Isaiah 43**

The LORD alone is God and Savior.

## **Isaiah 44:1-20**

Isaiah scorns the worship of idols.

## **Isaiah 44:21–45:13**

The sovereign LORD redeems Israel through Persian King Cyrus, His anointed.

## **Isaiah 45:14-25**

The righteous LORD, the only Savior.

## **Isaiah 46**

The true God contrasted with lifeless idols.

## **Isaiah 47**

An oracle of judgment against Babylon, soon to fall and never rise again.

## **Isaiah 48**

An appeal to Israel to believe God's word and heed His commandments.

## **Isaiah 49:1-7**

The second of the four "Servant Songs," the LORD's servant is called Israel (verse 3) but clearly transcends Israel (verses 1-7).

## **Isaiah 49:8-26**

The restoration of Israel is promised. Verse 15 has been beautifully rendered in William Couper's hymn, "Hark, My Soul, it is the Lord," while verse 16 provided the inspiration for the last stanza of Toplady's "A Debtor to Mercy Alone."

## **Isaiah 50**

Verses 4-11 record the third of Isaiah's four "Servant Songs." Israel's suffering amidst her captors foreshadows the suffering of the Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Matthew 27:26; John 19:1).

### **Isaiah 51**

Israel is called to look back to its founders, to the law of God, and to the LORD's creative and redemptive acts, that it might find comfort and confidence in these.

### **Isaiah 52:1-12**

The salvation of Zion is promised.

### **Isaiah 52:13–53:12**

The last of the four "Servant Songs," focusing on the redemptive suffering of the LORD's servant, far transcending Israel and pointing to the suffering of *the* Servant, the Messiah, the Christ.

### **Isaiah 54**

As a result of Messiah's suffering (chapter 53), an enlarged and unending covenant of peace shall be established.

### **Isaiah 55**

The suffering of the Messiah in chapter 53 results in the growing church of chapter 54 and the gospel call of chapter 55.

### **Isaiah 56**

Chapters 56-66 form the last great section of Isaiah's prophesy. They focus on an Israel restored to Zion, addressing both its glory (chapters 60-66) and its shame (chapters 56-59).

### **Isaiah 57**

Addressing perhaps the flagrant apostasy of Manasseh's reign (2 Kings 21), idolatry is condemned in verses 1-13, while comfort is extended to the contrite in verses 14-21.

### **Isaiah 58**

Formal religious ritual without social conscience is condemned in verses 1-12, while careful and joyful religious observance is urged in verses 13,14.

### **Isaiah 59**

Human depravity, elaborated in verses 1-15a and cited by the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:15-17, finds its answer only in the Redeemer described in verses 16b-21, as Isaiah concludes his description of Zion's shame.

### **Isaiah 60**

The focus shifts in chapters 60-66 from Zion's shame (chapters 55-59) to Zion's glory. Isaiah portrays the return of despised Israel to Zion and the inflow of the nations a model of the greater world-wide gathering of converts into the church of Christ.

### **Isaiah 61**

The song of the LORD's anointed, the Spirit-endowed Servant of the LORD, first sung by Isaiah but fulfilled by Jesus (Luke 4:17-21; 7:22).

### **Isaiah 62**

The LORD's determination to perfect Zion and His call to her watchmen to importunity on her behalf.

### **Isaiah 63:1-14**

The LORD avenges the nations, represented by Edom (verses 1-6), and His former mercies are remembered (verses 7-14).

### **Isaiah 63:15–64:12**

An extended prayer for renewed mercy for God's forlorn people, among the most eloquent intercessions of the Bible.

### **Isaiah 65**

The LORD's willingness to be found by those who seek Him and His rejection of those who forsake Him (verses 1-16); the promise of a new heavens and a new earth (verses 17-25).

### **Isaiah 66**

Isaiah concludes his prophesy with a final vision of a renewed Zion and the ingathering of the nations.

### Author

Jeremiah, a priest from Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin is identified as the author of the prophesy bearing his name. Known as the “weeping prophet” (see 8:18–9:2), Jeremiah, though bold in public, is periodically despondent in private, as revealed in a series of passages known as his “confessions” (11:8-20; 12:1-4; 15:10-18; 17:14-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-18). Often opposed by the authorities and others and his life frequently threatened (e.g. 11:8-23; 18:18; 26:8; 36:19; 38:6), yet by the end of his life his fame had spread even to Nebuchadnezzar, who made special provision for him when Jerusalem fell (39:11-14). He ministered for over 40 years.

### Date & Occasion

Jeremiah received his call in 625 B.C. during the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.), the reforming king. His warnings of judgment began then and extended through the reigns of Jehoahaz (609), Jehoiakim (609–598), Jehoiachin (598–597), and Zedekiah (597–586). This was a tumultuous time, when Assyria fell to the Babylonians (612 B.C.), the first deportations of Judeans in 605, and the invasions of Nebuchadnezzar in 597 and 586 B.C., the last of which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of its population to Babylon.

### Message

Jeremiah begins with a call to repentance in order to avoid the judgment that otherwise would come (e.g. 7:1-15) and ends with the warning that the time for repentance is past and judgment is now determined (19:10,11). He also preaches a message of hope, but only on the other side of judgment, as he prophesies of the fall of Babylon (fulfilled in 539 B.C.), the return of a remnant from exile, and the establishment of a new covenant (33:31-34), a promise fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 8:8).

## Jeremiah 1

The call of the prophet Jeremiah, 626 B.C.

### **Jeremiah 2:1-19**

In chapters 2-20 Jeremiah warns Judah of judgment and calls for repentance. In chapter 2 Judah's idolatry is condemned.

### **Jeremiah 2:20-37**

Judah's lust for idols is compared to a donkey in heat.

### **Jeremiah 3**

Faithless Judah is likened to a shameless whore and yet is promised mercy if it will repent.

### **Jeremiah 4:1-18**

Judah is called to break up the fallow ground before the wrath of God should come and it is too late.

### **Jeremiah 4:19-31**

Jeremiah anguishes over Judah's coming desolation; Judah is likened to a forsaken woman.

### **Jeremiah 5:1-13**

Because the poor and the great alike refuse to repent, pardon for Jerusalem is impossible.

### **Jeremiah 5:14-31**

Jeremiah warns that judgment shall come upon Judah through a foreign power.

### **Jeremiah 6:1-15**

Jeremiah warns that Jerusalem shall be besieged and destroyed, and warns against the false prophets who promise "'peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (verse 14).

### **Jeremiah 6:16-30**

Jeremiah calls Judah back to the "ancient paths" (verse 16).

### **Jeremiah 7:1-20**

Jeremiah condemns a formal religion that is unaccompanied by moral reform or uncleansed of idolatry.

### **Jeremiah 7:21-34**

Jeremiah urges the priority of obedience over religious ritual, condemns idolatry, and warns of judgment.

### **Jeremiah 8**

Jeremiah condemns the wise men, prophets, priests, and the whole people, and grieves their desolation asking, “Is there no balm in Gilead?” (that is, no healing medicine, no comfort in Israel?) (verse 22).

### **Jeremiah 9:1-11**

Jeremiah weeps for Jerusalem’s desolation.

### **Jeremiah 9:12-26**

Jeremiah explains to the wise that destruction comes upon Judah because of her disobedience.

### **Jeremiah 10**

The true God contrasted with idols.

### **Jeremiah 11**

In chapters 11-13 the covenantal aspects of Judah’s idolatry are highlighted. Judah has broken the covenant with God ratified at Sinai.

### **Jeremiah 12**

Jeremiah complains in prayer that the wicked prosper seemingly by the hand of the LORD.

### **Jeremiah 13:1-14**

Judah is likened to a ruined loincloth, and to jars filled with wine.

### **Jeremiah 13:15-27**

Judah is threatened with exile.

### **Jeremiah 14:1-12**

Judah suffers with drought and famine, and God will no longer hear the pleas of His people.

### **Jeremiah 14:13-22**

The lying prophets are denounced: Judah shall perish by the sword.

### **Jeremiah 15**

Following Jeremiah's complaints (14:19-22), the LORD refuses to relent of his promised judgment (verses 1-9); and Jeremiah complains this time of his persecutors (verses 10, 15-18) and the LORD promises protection (verses 19-21).

### **Jeremiah 16**

The LORD prohibits marriage, mourning, and feasting for Jeremiah as a sign of Judah's dismal future.

### **Jeremiah 17:1-13**

The sin of Judah.

### **Jeremiah 17:14-27**

Jeremiah prays for deliverance (verses 14-18) and the LORD promises His blessing if Jerusalem will keep the Sabbath day holy (verses 19-27).

### **Jeremiah 18**

The metaphor of the potter and the clay is employed in verses 1-17; Jeremiah's adversaries plot against him in verses 18-23.

### **Jeremiah 19**

Israel is likened to an earthen jar that is broken.

### **Jeremiah 20**

As Pashhur, a leading priest, persecutes Jeremiah, he bitterly laments his suffering as a prophet and yet recognizes his inward and inescapable compulsion to speak.

### **Jeremiah 21**

In chapters 21-29 Jeremiah prophesies of salvation only through exile. In chapter 21 (597–586 B.C.) Jeremiah prophesies to King Zedekiah that Jerusalem shall fall to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and counsels surrender.

### **Jeremiah 22:1-12**

The house of David is urged to do justice and righteousness.

### **Jeremiah 22:13-30**

The sons of King Josiah are denounced: Shallum, Jehoiakim, Coniah.

### **Jeremiah 23:1-22**

The LORD promises to set careful shepherds over His people and to raise up a righteous branch for David to reign as king (verses 1-8); and the lying prophets are denounced (verses 9-22).

### **Jeremiah 23:23-40**

Jeremiah continues to denounce the lying prophets.

### **Jeremiah 24**

Following the first large deportation by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C., Jeremiah is shown a vision of two baskets of figs.

### **Jeremiah 25:1-14**

The scene shifts back to 605 B.C. when Babylon first began attacking in Palestine. Jeremiah predicts 70 years of captivity for Judah and punishment for Babylon.

### **Jeremiah 25:15-38**

The nations around the vicinity of Judah and to the ends of the earth shall be forced to drink along with Judah the cup of God's wrath.

### **Jeremiah 26**

Jeremiah prophesies in the Temple precincts at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, 609–608 B.C., and is threatened with death.

### **Jeremiah 27**

At the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, 593 B.C., Zedekiah and his mideastern allies are commanded to submit to the yoke of Babylon.

## **Jeremiah 28**

The false prophet Hananiah is denounced.

## **Jeremiah 29**

Jeremiah writes from Jerusalem to those already exiled in Babylon urging resignation to 70 years of captivity and warning of Jerusalem's imminent destruction.

## **Jeremiah 30**

Having prophesied of Judah's destruction (chs. 2-20) and of exile (chs. 21-29), Jeremiah now promises that Israel & Judah shall be restored to the land of promise.

## **Jeremiah 31**

As the prophesy of restoration of the Hebrews from captivity continues from chapter 30, God promises to establish a "new covenant" with His people (v. 31), ultimately fulfilled in Christ Jesus (cf. Hebrews 8:8-12)

## **Jeremiah 32:1-25**

God instructs Jeremiah to buy a field in Anathoth, his hometown south of Jerusalem, at the height of Babylon's siege of Jerusalem and impending deportations, a command that the prophet finds puzzling.

## **Jeremiah 32:26-44**

The Lord explains to Jeremiah that his purchase of land in Israel even as Jerusalem is being besieged and its population deported signals the hope and promise that Israel will return from exile.

## **Jeremiah 33**

Jeremiah continues as a prisoner of Zedekiah "in the court of the guard" (v. 11) in the year 587. Even as Jerusalem is being destroyed by the Babylonians, he announces God's promises of reconstruction, forgiveness, a restored Davidic monarchy and Levitical priesthood, and an everlasting covenant. All this, ultimately, is fulfilled through *the* Son of David (Matthew 1:1ff), our great High Priest (Hebrews 5:6-10; 7:11-25), Jesus the Messiah.

### **Jeremiah 34**

King Zedekiah and the people of Israel are condemned for freeing and then re-enslaving brother Israelites.

### **Jeremiah 35**

Judah is unfavorably compared to the Rechabites, a clan which obeyed its father Jonadab's command to live a nomadic life and abstain from wine, while Judah has failed to obey the commands of God spoken through His prophets.

### **Jeremiah 36**

Jeremiah's oracles are collected and recorded on scrolls, read by his scribe Baruch in the temple, and again by Jehudi to King Jehoiakim and his officials in December 604. The king responds, with Nebuchadnezzar already in the suburbs of Jerusalem, by burning Jeremiah's scrolls.

### **Jeremiah 37**

In the year 597, Jeremiah warns that the withdrawal of the Babylonian army is only temporary, and that Pharaoh's army will provide no help. Jeremiah is accused of desertion and is imprisoned.

### **Jeremiah 38**

Jeremiah is cast into cistern by his enemies and left to die. Rescued by the king's servants Jeremiah again counsels King Zedekiah to surrender to the king of Babylon.

### **Jeremiah 39**

After a two-and-one-half year siege, Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians in July of 586, the nobility is slaughtered, and the population is deported; but the life of Jeremiah is spared.

### **Jeremiah 40**

Jeremiah is released from among the captives who are bound in chains and heading for exile in Babylon, and allowed to remain in Judah.

### **Jeremiah 41**

Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the King of Babylon to rule Judah, is murdered.

### **Jeremiah 42**

The remnant of Judah is warned by God through Jeremiah not to flee to Egypt.

### **Jeremiah 43**

Fearing Babylonian reprisals following the murder of Gedaliah, the governor of Judah, the remnant of Judah defies Jeremiah's prophetic warning and flees to Egypt.

### **Jeremiah 44**

The Judean exiles are warned against idolatry in Egypt, which they refuse to abandon, bringing the promise of further disaster for them and Egypt alike.

### **Jeremiah 45**

The 45<sup>th</sup> chapter recalls God's promise to spare the life of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, delivered, according to verse 1, at the time of the preparation of the first scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies (36:1-3).

### **Jeremiah 46**

Chapters 46-51 record a series of judgment oracles against the nations surrounding Israel. Chapter 46 records the first: judgment upon Egypt.

*If it is not deemed desirable to read these oracles (due to length and repetition) one may summarize these chapters with the following statement leading to the reading of chapter 52.*

Chapters 46-51 record a series of judgment oracles against the nations surrounding Israel: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Danaius, Kedar, Hazar, Elam, and Babylon.

### **Jeremiah 47**

The second of Jeremiah's judgment oracles: judgment upon the Philistines.

### **Jeremiah 48:1-25**

The third of Jeremiah's oracles: judgment upon Moab.

### **Jeremiah 48:26-47**

The conclusion of Jeremiah's third judgment oracle, against Moab.

### **Jeremiah 49:1-22**

The fourth and fifth of Jeremiah's judgment oracles: judgment upon Ammon and Edom.

### **Jeremiah 49:23-39**

The sixth, seventh, and eighth of Jeremiah's judgment oracles: judgment upon Damascus, Kedar and Hazar, and Elam.

### **Jeremiah 50:1-20**

Jeremiah's ninth judgment oracle, extending to the end of chapter 51: judgment upon Babylon.

### **Jeremiah 50:21-46**

Jeremiah's judgment oracle against Babylon continues.

### **Jeremiah 51:1-19**

Jeremiah's judgment oracle against Babylon continues.

### **Jeremiah 51:20-40**

Jeremiah's judgment oracle against Babylon continues.

### **Jeremiah 51:41-64**

Jeremiah's judgment oracle against Babylon concludes.

### **Jeremiah 52**

The fall of Jerusalem, already described in chapter 39, is recounted in this final chapter of Jeremiah's prophesy, as a reminder that Jeremiah's prophecies had been fulfilled, yet

ending on the hopeful sign of kindness shown to King Jehoiakim by the King of Babylon.



## **Lamentations**

### **Author**

Jeremiah traditionally has been credited with the authorship of Lamentations. This has been true at least since the writing of the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (c. 250 B.C.). Jeremiah was a prophet and priest of Judah in her last days, and has sometimes been called the “weeping prophet.”

### **Date & Occasion**

The setting is Jerusalem after its fall to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. and before the return of the first wave of exiles in 538 B.C.

### **Message**

Each of the five chapters is a poetic lament in which Jeremiah expresses his inconsolable grief over Jerusalem’s anguish. These laments feature the elements typical of Hebrew poetry: complaint, affirmation of trust, and appeal for deliverance from enemies. Lamentations anticipates the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39) and points ahead to His humiliation and cry of dereliction from the cross (Matthew 27:46), beyond which lies restoration and exaltation. Christians have found in Lamentations the language to express their grief, especially in times of personal or national grief.

### **Lamentations 1**

Jeremiah weeps for Jerusalem, the once favored city, which now lies desolate, her children taken captive to Babylon in this his first of five laments.

### **Lamentations 2**

Jeremiah’s second lament for Zion, that is, Jerusalem, consumed by the LORD’s righteous anger.

### **Lamentations 3:1-38**

Jeremiah’s third lament, a personal complaint, at verse 21 turns into an affirmation of hope rooted in the knowledge of the LORD’s great faithfulness.

### **Lamentations 3:39-66**

Jeremiah's concludes his third lament with pleas for deliverance from his enemies.

### **Lamentations 4**

In his fourth lament Jeremiah vividly portrays Jerusalem's suffering, yet concludes with assurance that Zion's punishment is accomplished while her enemy's is just beginning.

### **Lamentations 5**

Jeremiah reviews once more Jerusalem's degradation at the hands of her Babylonian invaders and pleas for restoration in this his fifth and final lament.

### **Author**

As is the case with many of the prophetic books, we know little about Ezekiel except what we can learn from the book bearing his name. When Nebuchadnezzar first captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and took away King Jehoiachin and a number of leading citizens into exile, Ezekiel at the age of 26 was among this first group of deportees (2 Kings 24:14). He was a priest and he began his prophetic ministry at the age of 30 in Babylon (1:1-3). He was there when his wife died and when news arrived of Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (24:15-18). His prophetic ministry continued for at least 23 years until about the age of 50 (29:17). The circumstances of his death are unknown.

### **Date & Occasion**

Ezekiel writes during an era when Assyria was declining, Babylon was rising, and Egypt and Babylon were wrestling for control of the land between their rival empires, that is, coastal Syria and Palestine. Israel's kings vacillated in their allegiance between the great powers, trying the patience of the Babylonians who deport (597 B.C.) and finally destroy the nation (586 B.C.).

### **Message**

Ezekiel may be divided into three parts:

1. Judgment on Jerusalem – chapters 1-24
2. Judgment on the nations – chapters 25-32
3. Mercy and restoration for Israel – chapters 33-48

It is written autobiographically, is filled with symbolic actions, "enacted parables" (3:22-36; 4:1-14; 5:1-4; 12:10-20; 21:6,7, 18-24; 24:15-24; 37:15,28), parables (chapters 15,16,17,19,23) and proverbs (12:21,22; 16:44; 18:2,3). Ezekiel proclaims the transcendent glory of God as well as God's imminence in mercy (e.g. 36:26,27). It is "easily the most bizarre of all the prophets," says J.A. Motyer.

## **Ezekiel 1**

Ezekiel writes from Babylon, on his 30<sup>th</sup> year (the age priests normally assumed the full responsibilities of their office), in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile (July 593 B.C.; cf. 2 Kings 24; 2 Chronicles 36), from the banks of the Chebar canal (Hebrews outside of Israel often gathered for worship along streams of water), recording his vision of the glory of the Lord, as "the word of the Lord came to (him)" (v. 3).

## **Ezekiel 2**

Ezekiel is called to serve as God's prophet.

## **Ezekiel 3**

Ezekiel is commissioned to speak to the house of Israel in exile, as God's "watchman."

## **Ezekiel 4**

Ezekiel symbolically portrays the coming final siege of Jerusalem and the punishment of the houses of Israel & Judah (realized in 587-86).

## **Ezekiel 5**

Ezekiel symbolically enacts and then declares Israel's punishment: a third shall die by plague and famine, a third shall die by the sword, a third shall be scattered to the winds, and a small part preserved as a remnant.

## **Ezekiel 6**

God's judgment against idolatry is announced.

## **Ezekiel 7**

Ezekiel announces the arrival of the day of wrath without pity against the land of Israel.

## **Ezekiel 8**

Ezekiel's vision of Chapters 8-11 begins with four types of idolatry in the Temple in Jerusalem, abominations which shall bring God's wrath without pity.

### **Ezekiel 9**

As Ezekiel's vision continues, God's executioners destroy the idolaters of Jerusalem while the faithful are identified and spared.

### **Ezekiel 10**

Ezekiel sees burning coals scattered over the city, cherubim are again described (as in chapter 1:15ff), as the glory of the Lord leaves the temple.

### **Ezekiel 11**

Ezekiel's vision, which began in chapter 8, concludes with the promise that even in captivity God will preserve a remnant, even as the glory of the Lord leaves the city.

### **Ezekiel 12**

Ezekiel symbolically portrays Israel's captivity and exile.

### **Ezekiel 13**

The condemnation of false prophets, which began in 12:21, continues.

### **Ezekiel 14**

The condemnation of false prophets, begun in 12:21 continues to 14:11; the chapter concludes with the promise of Jerusalem's destruction.

### **Ezekiel 15**

The Lord likens Jerusalem to a useless vine, good only for burning.

### **Ezekiel 16:1-34**

The Lord likens Jerusalem to abandoned infant which he rescued, and a faithless wife upon whom he lavished his gifts.

### **Ezekiel 16:35-58**

The Lord's judgments are pronounced on Judah for its spiritual adultery, sins that exceeded even those of Sodom & Samaria; yet a restoring, everlasting covenant is promised.

### **Ezekiel 17**

The Parable of Two Eagles and a Vine is delivered, representing King Zedekiah's shift of allegiance from Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King who had installed Zedekiah as king, to Egypt, a political move that the Lord condemned.

### **Ezekiel 18**

Ezekiel repudiates the proverb of the sour grapes, explaining that each individual and each generation suffers for its own sin.

### **Ezekiel 19**

Ezekiel likens Israel first to a lioness which produces cubs (i.e. kings) and then to an uprooted vine in his lament for "the princes of Israel" (v. 1).

### **Ezekiel 20:1-25**

As in 8:11 and 14:1, the elders of Israel exiled in Babylon with Ezekiel gather to seek counsel from Ezekiel, now about a year later than the date last mentioned, or August 591 B.C., five years to the day before Jerusalem is to be burned.

### **Ezekiel 20:27-49**

Ezekiel continues to instruct the elders of Israel in the failure of their fathers to keep God's commandments and honor His Sabbaths, failures which they have perpetuated. Yet a judged and scattered people shall be re-gathered in a new exodus, purged in a new wilderness experience, and restored to the land.

### **Ezekiel 21**

The sword of the Lord, normally wielded against Israel's enemies, is drawn against Israel.

### **Ezekiel 22**

Israel condemned for its immorality, idolatry, and injustice and subjected to the refiner's furnace.

### **Ezekiel 23:1-27**

An allegory of two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah, who represent two cities: Samaria, capitol of the northern kingdom, and Jerusalem, capitol of the southern kingdom.

### **Ezekiel 23:28-49**

The allegory of the two sisters concludes God promising judgment upon Jerusalem through her “lovers.”

### **Ezekiel 24**

Jerusalem is compared to a boiling pot whose corrosion (rust) cannot be cleansed (vv 1-14); Ezekiel’s wife, the “delight” of his eyes (v. 16), dies, and he must forgo customary mourning, ordinary practices being inadequate to represent the depth of his sorrow (vv. 15-26).

### **Ezekiel 25**

Chapters 25-32 contain a series of oracles against most of the states of the ancient Near East. Chapter 25 features prophecies against Ammon, Moab, Seir, Edam, and Philistia.

### **Ezekiel 26**

Chapters 26-28 feature prophecies against Israel’s Phoenician neighbors, the wealthy trading cities of Tyre and Sidon.

### **Ezekiel 27**

A lament for Tyre, likened to a beautiful trading ship, laden with goods, that sails into the depths of the sea.

### **Ezekiel 28**

Tyre and Sidon denounced as “the culmination and embodiment of the spirit of carnal pride and self-sufficiency” (JFB); the restoration of Israel promised.

### **Ezekiel 29**

Prophecy against Egypt, delivered first in 587 B.C. (a year after Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem) and again in 571 B.C. (v. 17), promising that Egypt will be delivered to

Nebuchadnezzar, exiled, and after 40 years restored, though in a permanently degraded condition.

### **Ezekiel 30**

The prophecies against Egypt, begun in chapter 29, continue.

### **Ezekiel 31**

Pharaoh's fate is compared to that of once proud and mighty Assyria, like a cedar of Lebanon now cut down.

### **Ezekiel 32**

A lament for Pharaoh delivered two months after word of Jerusalem's destruction reached the exiles (March 585), as the prophecies against Egypt, begun in chapter 29, are concluded.

### **Ezekiel 33:1-20**

The duty of the prophet likened to that of a "watchman" on the walls of the city, and individual moral responsibility emphasized.

### **Ezekiel 33:21-33**

Verse 21 marks the transition to the second half of Ezekiel's prophecy. Once word of Jerusalem's fall reached the exiles in Babylon (v. 21), focus shifts from Jerusalem's sinful past and tragic present to its future restoration and glory. Verses 21-33 record a new willingness to hear, yet not heed, Ezekiel's message.

### **Ezekiel 34:1-19**

Ezekiel denounces the shepherds, that is, the leaders, especially the kings of Israel, declaring God Himself shall be their shepherd.

### **Ezekiel 34:20-31**

God promises to restore David as shepherd of Israel, establish a covenant of peace, and send showers of blessings (v. 26).

### **Ezekiel 35**

Mt. Seir, a synonym for Edom, the ancestral enemy of Israel, is denounced and promised destruction.

### **Ezekiel 36:1-21**

Following the prophesy of judgment against Mt. Seir, a prophesy of restoration is directed to the mountains of Israel.

### **Ezekiel 36:22-38**

The Lord GOD declares that He will act to restore Israel for His own name's sake, sprinkling clean water on the house of Israel, giving it a new heart and a new spirit.

### **Ezekiel 37**

The vision of the field of dry bones to which the people of God are likened, followed by the joining of two sticks, representing the two kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim (Israel), which shall be reunited under a Davidic King, the Messiah.

### **Ezekiel 38**

Prior to his vision of a renewed city of God and temple, Ezekiel prophecies in chapters 38 and 39 against Gog and Magog, unknown entities which probably represent a coalition of Israel's enemies gathered for decisive battle.

### **Ezekiel 39**

Prophecies against Gog and Magog, Meshech and Tubal, symbolic of Israel's enemies, continue from chapter 38, along with the promise of Israel's restoration from exile.

### **Ezekiel 40–43:9**

Read 40:1-4

Read 43:1-9

Ezekiel's prophecy concludes with a vision, even a guided tour, of the restored city of God and temple, which extends over the final nine chapters, portraying an ideal time when God will bless His people and be present among them. (Read 40:1-4.) The remainder of chapters 40–42 describe the temple and its courts. Chapter 43 describes the return of the glory of God to

the temple, whose departure had previously been described by Ezekiel (10:18-22; 11:22-24). (Read 43:1-9.)

**Ezekiel 43:9–48:30**

Read 47:1-12

Ezekiel continues to record his vision of the restored city and temple, describing the altar, the gate for the prince, various rules, sacred precincts, offerings, and feasts and land allotments, ending with the promise, “the LORD is here.” Chapter 47:1-12 describes a life-giving river which shall flow from the temple, an image which Jesus employs in describing Himself as the source of “living water” (John 4:10-14; cf. 7:37-39).

## Daniel

### Author

The author identifies himself as Daniel (9:2; 10:2), one of the young Hebrew men taken into the service of the King of Babylon as described in Chapter 1.

### Date & Occasion

Verses 1-7 place the book of Daniel in the period immediately following the victory of Babylon and the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. The Babylonians followed up this victory by invading Judah in what was the first of three invasions (in 605, 547, and 587). Among the spoils of victory were certain outstanding youth who were taken captive to Babylon. Daniel writes his prophesy from Babylon.

### Message

Though Judas was defeated in battle, taken captive and exiled to a distant land, God is still absolutely sovereign over human affairs. Kingdoms may rise and fall, whether the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, or Romans, but God rules over all, and the people of God and the plans of God are secure. Despite the changing circumstances of life, God's people must remain faithful to Him, who ultimately will destroy His enemies and deliver His people through a Savior.

### Daniel 1

The first chapter describes the occasion of the training of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, outstanding Hebrew youth to Babylon to be educated in "the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (v. 4). Despite refusing the king's food, these Hebrew youths prove superior in appearance and wisdom than all the wise men of Babylon.

### Daniel 2:1-24

Daniel alone, among all the wise men of Babylon, is able to tell King Nebuchadnezzar both his troubling dream and its interpretation.

### **Daniel 2:25-46**

Daniel interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a succession of kingdoms, leading to the establishment of the kingdom of God. Daniel is rewarded with high honors and authority.

### **Daniel 3**

God delivers Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from fiery furnace, into which they were cast for their refusal to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image.

### **Daniel 4:1-27**

Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, a prophesy of the King's humiliation for his failure to recognize the sovereignty of God.

### **Daniel 4:28-37**

Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation, foretold in his own dream as interpreted by Daniel, is triggered by his proud failure to recognize the sovereignty of God.

### **Daniel 5**

Mysterious "handwriting on the wall" condemns King Belshazzar for his sacrilege leading to the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 B.C.

### **Daniel 6**

Daniels' enemies conspire to have him cast into a lion's den for his refusal to worship Darius the king of Persia.

### **Daniel 7**

Recalls Daniel's prophetic vision of four beasts representing four kingdoms: the Medo-Persian, the Greek, the Roman, and a final kingdom of ten horns, all of which are superseded by His vision of the everlasting kingdom of the Ancient of Days.

### **Daniel 8**

Recalls a second vision which came to Daniel early in Belshazzar's reign, also of the succession of empires from the

Medo-Persian to the Greek, to the rise of the wicked Antiochus IV Epiphanies who would persecute the people of God.

### **Daniel 9**

Daniel, in 539–538 B.C., recalls Jeremiah’s prophecy that the years of captivity would be 70 (Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10). Consequently he prays for the restoration of Jerusalem, but not before he prays an extended prayer of confession of sin.

### **Daniel 10**

In the third year of Cyrus, 536 B.C., two to three years after the prayer of Daniel in chapter 9, Daniel is terrified by a vision of a heavenly being, which he receives while still in Babylon.

### **Daniel 11:1-19**

Daniel returns to the timeframe of the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, 539–538 B.C., and he prophesies of the rise of Xerxes, his war with the Greeks, the rise of Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.), the division of his empire, conflict between the king of the north (the Seleucid kingdom) and the king of the south (the Ptolemaic Kingdom).

### **Daniel 11:20-45**

Daniel’s prophecy continues, as he tells of the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphany, his abominations, and blasphemies and defeat by “the King of the North.”

### **Daniel 12**

Daniel prophesies of the end of time.



## Hosea

### Author

Little is known about Hosea beyond his name and calling. He was a prophet to the northern kingdom Israel.

### Date & Occasion

Hosea ministered from about 750 B.C. to a few years before the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. This was a period of political and religious decline in Israel, following the prosperity and security of the 40-year reign of Jeroboam II (c. 793–753 B.C.) Six kings reigned over the next 25 years of political and social chaos, four of whom were assassinated by their usurpers. Syncretism, idolatry, and immorality had polluted Israel's religion.

### Message

Hosea uses vivid metaphors, especially marriage, to denounce Israel's unfaithfulness and call the nation to repentance. He also holds out hope of restoration (e.g. 1:6; 2:23) based on the mercy of God, ultimately fulfilled only in Christ (Romans 9:25,26; 1 Peter 2:10).

### Hosea 1

Hosea is commanded to marry a wife of harlotry and bear children of harlotry, a command that we are to understand retrospectively.

### Hosea 2

The judgments of God upon unfaithful Israel are followed by His restoring mercies.

### Hosea 3–4

In chapter 3 Hosea recounts his remarriage to his unfaithful wife, a picture of God's merciful reconciliation with faithless Israel. In chapter 4 Hosea speaks as God's advocate bringing charges, a covenantal lawsuit against Israel, for violating the terms of the covenant.

### **Hosea 5**

Both Ephraim (another name for the northern kingdom of Israel) and Judah are condemned for their spiritual harlotry and warned of the LORD's withdrawal from them until they repent.

### **Hosea 6**

Israel & Judah are rebuked for their superficial repentance (verses 1-3), their fickle affections (verse 4), their ritual sacrifices (verse 6), and their transgression of the covenant (verses 7ff).

### **Hosea 7**

The northern kingdom, called by the names of Ephraim and Samaria (the capital city) is rebuked for its half-baked alliances (verse 8) and its dove-like silliness (verse 11) in turning from the LORD to foreigners for safety.

### **Hosea 8**

Having sown the wind of unfaithfulness to God, Israel shall reap the whirlwind of His judgment.

### **Hosea 9**

Israel's (also called Ephraim) dalliances with the fertility gods will result in infertility and scarcity.

### **Hosea 10**

Israel is urged to forsake its idols, to break up the fallow ground of its heart, and sow righteousness (verses 11, 12).

### **Hosea 11**

The LORD's love for prodigal Israel.

### **Hosea 12**

The LORD's indictment of Israel (called by the name of Ephraim) and Judah.

### **Hosea 13**

Ephraim, another name for the northern kingdom Israel, is condemned for its idolatry and warned that God shall fall upon it in judgment like a lion, a leopard, and a bear.

### **Hosea 14**

Israel urged to repent and return to the LORD, where it will find healing and love.



## **Author**

Verse 1 identifies the author as “Joel, the son of Pethuel.” Otherwise little is known about him.

## **Date & Occasion**

Scholars range in their opinions on the date of Joel’s writing from the ninth century B.C. to just before the exile in the sixth century B.C. to the post-exilic period in the fifth century B.C.. Joel provides no clear indication of the time in which he is writing.

## **Message**

Joel warns of the coming “day of the Lord,” which shall be a day of “destruction from the Almighty” (1:15). He warns that the present plague of locusts that the nation is enduring is a precursor of a greater judgment and calls the people of God to repentance, assuring them that God remains merciful (2:12-13). Joel points ahead to a coming day when the Holy Spirit will be poured out on “all flesh,” when whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, and when God’s final judgment shall be rendered, all of which we know is fulfilled in connection with the work of Christ (2:28-32; Acts 2;16-21; Romans 10:13; Revelation 6:9, 9,2).

## **Joel 1**

Joel interprets the devastation brought by a plague of locusts and drought as judgments from the LORD (verse 1-12) and calls the nation to repentance (verses 13-20).

## **Joel 2:1-17**

Joel warns of the nearness of the terrible “day of the LORD” and calls for fasting, weeping, and mourning, holding out hope that the “gracious and merciful” LORD may “turn and relent” (verses 13,14).

### **Joel 2:18-32**

The LORD promises a repentant Israel restored prosperity and plenty and even the outpouring of His Spirit, a promise ultimately fulfilled in Christ at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21).

### **Joel 3**

The LORD promises through Joel that the enemies of the people of God shall be judged (verses 1-16) and Judah shall know security and abundance forever (verses 17-21).

### **Author**

The prophet Amos was born in Tekoa, a village five miles south of Bethlehem, 15 miles south of Jerusalem. Amos was “not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet” (7:14), that is, he had not studied to be a prophet and was not apprenticed in one of Israel’s prophetic schools. By training he was a “shepherd” (1:1), “herdsman” or livestock breeder, and a “dresser of sycamore figs” (7:14). He was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea.

### **Date & Occasion**

Amos ministered primarily to the northern tribe of Israel during the reigns of Uzziah of Judah (792–740 B.C.) and Jeroboam II of Israel (793–753 B.C.). It was a period of peace and prosperity. Israel’s neighbors were temporarily weak (Babylon, Egypt, Assyria), Israel grew wealthy, and enjoyed a false sense of security.

### **Message**

Amos brings what has been called a “covenant lawsuit,” indicting Israel for its idolatry, immorality, and injustice. He warns of God’s judgment, of coming destruction and exile, but also a time of restoration and blessing (9:11 ff).

### **Amos 1**

Amos begins his ministry delivering the welcome message of the LORD’s judgment upon Israel’s neighbors and ancestral enemies: Syria (Damascus), Philistia (Gaza), Phoenicia (Tyre), and Edom.

### **Amos 2**

The welcome message of the LORD’s punishment of Israel’s neighbors and enemies continues with Moab, and then, perhaps too close for comfort, Judah, and finally the unanticipated and unwelcome message of His punishment of Israel.

### **Amos 3**

Amos prosecutes a covenant lawsuit on the LORD's behalf against Israel, summoning the nations as witnesses, and warning that only a remnant shall survive the coming judgment.

### **Amos 4**

Amos prosecutes a second covenant lawsuit targeting the "cows of Bashan" (Bashan being a fertile area east of the Jordan River) and recalling various judgments which the LORD sent to warn Israel, yet failed to result in repentance. Consequently he warns, "prepare to meet your God" (verse 12).

### **Amos 5**

Israel is urged to seek the LORD and live (verses 1-17) and warned that the day of the LORD, eagerly anticipated as the day of destruction for Israel's enemies, shall instead be just that for Israel itself.

### **Amos 6**

Amos condemns "those who are at ease in Zion," who enjoy their wealth and power, and are disinterested in the moral and religious ruin of Israel.

### **Amos 7:1-8:3**

Amos tells of four visions of Israel's destruction, after the third of which there is an attempt to force Amos to stop his pessimistic and (perhaps) unpatriotic prophesies.

### **Amos 8:4-14**

Amos charges Israel with indifference to the plight of the poor, judicial corruption, and deceitful commercial practices. He warns of a coming famine for the word of the LORD (verse 11).

### **Amos 9**

Amos records his fifth vision of Israel's destruction and exile (verses 1-10) yet also promises a day of restoration (verses 11-15).

## Obadiah

### **Author**

Little is known about the prophet who gave his name to this prophesy. Obadiah means “servant of the LORD.”

### **Date & Occasion**

The occasion of Obadiah’s writing is an attack on Jerusalem in which the Edomites took part (verses 11-14). Scholars do not yet agree if this was the military assault led by Arabs and Philistines during King Jehoram’s reign (848–841 B.C.), or that of the Babylonians 250 years later (605–586 B.C.).

### **Message**

Obadiah’s prophesy is directed at the descendants of Esau, Edomites, yet is sacred Scripture given to the people of God who are meant to overhear its message. While Jerusalem lay in ruins and the evil Edomites appear to have triumphed, God asserts His sovereign purposes, promises to humble proud Edom, and restore His people.



# Jonah

## Author

We know from Jonah 1:1 and 2 Kings 14:25 that Jonah was the son of Amittai (of whom we know nothing) and from Gath-hepher, a prophet of the northern kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.). Jonah is the principle character of the book but the author is unknown.

## Date & Occasion

The first half of the eighth century B.C. was a period of peace and prosperity for both the northern and southern kingdoms. Israel enjoyed territorial expansion, population growth, and commercial success. As God's chosen, it was blessed by God. But Israel was not the only people about whom God had redemptive concerns as Jonah is sent to call Nineveh, the capital city of the hated Assyrian Empire, to repentance.

## Message

The message of Jonah is that of God's love for the world. It stands as a rebuke of national pride and ethnic bigotry, as Jonah is required to be God's agent in saving the Ninevites, so despised and feared by the people of God. Jonah anticipates the fuller revelation of God's love for the world manifested in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world (John 3:16; Matthew 28:18ff).

## Jonah 1

Jonah is called by God to preach repentance to Nineveh, flees instead, and is swallowed by a great fish.

## Jonah 2

Jonah cries out to God from the belly of the fish and the LORD delivers him.

## Jonah 3

Jonah obeys the LORD's call to preach judgment to Nineveh, which responds to his warning with humility and repentance.

## **Jonah 4**

Jonah despairs over God's mercy to Nineveh, bringing the LORD's rebuke upon Jonah's contempt for lost souls.

## Micah

### **Author:**

The book of Micah was written by the prophet whose name it bears. A contemporary of Isaiah, he ministered during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (750–686 B.C.). Micah was from Moresheth (1:1), or the foothills of Judah.

### **Place & Occasion:**

Micah was written at the time of the Assyrian invasions, 750–686 B.C., leading to the destruction and exile of the northern kingdom, Israel, in 722 B.C. and the occupation of Judah up to the gates of Jerusalem. He addresses both the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom, both Samaria and Judah.

### **Message:**

Micah denounces Israel for its idolatry, its oppression of the poor, injustice, and immorality. He calls the nation to repentance for sin and to obedience and faithfulness to God's covenant. Finally, Micah promises restoration through the Messiah, Whom God shall raise up from Bethlehem (5:1-5).

### **Micah 1**

Micah announces God's judgment upon Samaria (Israel) (verses 2-7) and upon Judah (verses 8-16).

### **Micah 2**

Micah denounces the greedy landowners (verses 1-5) and the false prophets who would have him silenced (verses 6-11). Yet, he says, the LORD will preserve a remnant (verses 12-13).

### **Micah 3**

Micah denounces the political and religious leadership of Israel.

### **Micah 4**

Micah's message shifts from impending judgment to the latter days, when the remnant shall be rescued and Messiah's rule established.

### **Micah 5**

Micah prophecies of the birth of Messiah in Bethlehem (verses 1-6) and of preserving and purging of His remnant (verses 7-15).

### **Micah 6**

Micah as covenant prosecutor indicts Israel for unfaithful to the terms of the covenant, summoning witnesses (verses 1,2), pronouncing covenant curses (verses 9-16), and reminding them of God's grace (verses 3-5) and His simple requirements: justice, kindness, and humility (verses 6-8).

### **Micah 7**

Micah laments that no one is righteous or trustworthy, and yet puts his confidence in the God who pardons iniquity.

## **Nahum**

### **Author**

Little is known about the prophet Nahum. He is identified as “Naham the Elkoshite” in 1:1, but attempts to identify Elkoshite have proven unsuccessful. As is typical of Old Testament prophets, his message is prominent while his identity recedes into the background.

### **Date & Occasion**

The prophesy of Nahum can be dated between 663 B.C. and 612 B.C., between the capture of Thebes by the Assyrians, which he reports as a past event (3:8), and the fall of Nineveh, which he reports as a future event (3:5-7). It is likely to date more specifically in the period 660–650 B.C., during the reign of King Manasseh of Judah.

### **Message**

Nahum delivers a “burden against Nineveh,” that is, a message of judgment against Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian Empire. Condemned for its arrogance, its lust for power, its brutal warmongering, and its insatiable materialism, Nineveh’s destruction is at the same time the deliverance/salvation of the people of God, one which foreshadows the salvation that will be theirs in its fullness only in Christ Jesus (cf. Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

### **Nahum 1**

The LORD’s wrath against Nineveh and good news for His people.

### **Nahum 2**

A vision of Nineveh’s destruction, though lying in the future, told in a vivid present tense.

### **Nahum 3**

Nineveh’s irreversible doom and the delight of the nations who endured her oppressions.



## **Habakkuk**

### **Author**

Nothing is known about the author who has given to this book its name outside of what can be gleaned from his prophesy itself. The meaning of his name is uncertain.

### **Date & Occasion**

Reference to the Babylonians as a threatening power places Habakkuk between the collapse of the Assyrian Empire (612–605 B.C.) but before Nebuchadnezzar II captured Jerusalem and deported King Jehoiachin to Babylon in 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:8-17). More precisely, it falls between the years 604 and 600 B.C., after the Battle of Carchenish in 605 B.C., which established Babylon as the dominant power in the region. Habakkuk writes on the one hand in the context of this Babylonian threat, and on the other the moral and religious decline in Judah.

### **Message**

Prayer, rather than prophetic preaching, forms the heart of Habakkuk's message. It begins with his cry against injustice in Judah (1:2-5), the LORD's bewildering answer (1:6-11); a second cry against what is perceived as a greater injustice (1:12–2:1), the LORD's second answer (2:2-5); and concludes with persevering prayer (chapter 3). The key to the whole is found in 2:4: the just shall live by faith, that is, persevering dependence upon and trust in God. This is the foundation of a right relationship with God to which the New Testament appeals in its presentation of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; cf. Hebrews 10:35-39).

### **Habakkuk 1**

Habakkuk complains to God of injustice in Judah, to which the Lord responds by sending the Chaldeans, leading to further complaint by Habakkuk that God's avengers are worse than those to whom they are being sent to punish.

## **Habakkuk 2**

As Habakkuk awaits the Lord's answer to the question he raised in Chapter 1 about the injustice of punishing wicked Judah through even more wicked Chaldeans, he is told that the Chaldeans also shall be punished in due time, and in the meanwhile, the righteous shall live by faith.

## **Habakkuk 3**

Habakkuk prays, remembering God's mighty acts in the past, confident of God's favor toward His people in the future.

# Zephaniah

## Author

Zephaniah is identified as the author of the book that bears his name. We know little about him beyond the genealogy in verse 1. His ancestor “Hezekiah” may be the king of Judah who reigned 715–686 B.C. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah.

## Date & Occasion

Zephaniah prophesied in the southern kingdom during the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.), the king under whom great reforms occurred in 621. Since Nineveh had not yet been destroyed (2:13-15), and since he denounces the idolatry that Josiah reformed, it is likely that Zephaniah prophesied in the earlier part of Josiah’s reign and was instrumental in bringing about those reforms.

## Message

Zephaniah warns of a coming day of the Lord in which God will use a foreign enemy to destroy Jerusalem for her sins. Yet, in the end, this judgment shall lead to restoration.

### Zephaniah 1

Zephaniah denounces Judah and Jerusalem for their idolatry and syncretism (verses 4-6), warning of a universal “day of the LORD,” a day of terrible judgment.

### Zephaniah 2

Zephaniah calls the people of God to seek the LORD while there is still time to escape His judgments (verses 1-3), even as they are reassured that their enemies shall be punished as well (verses 4-15).

### Zephaniah 3

The sins of Jerusalem are denounced (verses 1-5), the judgments of God upon the nations are recalled and anticipated (verses 6-8), and the future blessing of both Israel and the nations is promised (verses 9-20).



## Haggai

### **Author**

Haggai was a 6<sup>th</sup> century prophet, mentioned in Ezra and a contemporary of Zechariah. His name means “festal.” Little is known about him.

### **Date & Occasion**

The opening verse tells us that Haggai (like Zechariah) began his ministry “in the second year of Darius the King” (520 B.C.). His prophecy is addressed to the Judean exiles who had returned to Palestine under the edict of the Persian King Cyrus in 538 B.C. They had begun the work of rebuilding the temple, but had abandoned it for about 16 or 17 years in the face of opposition (see Ezra 4:1-4; 5:1ff).

### **Message**

Haggai delivers four messages (which begin at 1:1; 2:1; 2:10; 2:20) which alternate between calling the people of God to repentance in light of God’s curses on the land (1:1-11; 2:10-19) and promising greater blessings on the temple and through the Davidic Messiah, ultimately fulfilled in Christ (2:1-9; 2:20-23). Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament.

### **Haggai 1**

Haggai urges the people of God to recommence the construction of the temple even as he rebukes them for building their own comfortable homes while the house of God lies in ruins.

### **Haggai 2**

The LORD promises that the glory of the new temple (then being built) shall be greater than the glory of the former temple, that of Solomon, destroyed by the Babylonians.



## **Zechariah**

### **Author**

Zechariah was a 6<sup>th</sup> century contemporary of the prophet Haggai. He is identified in verse 1 as “the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo.”

### **Date & Occasion**

Like Haggai, Zechariah began his ministry in “the second year of Darius the King” (520 B.C.). He is addressing the exiles who had returned to Palestine beginning with the decree of Persian King Cyrus in 538 B.C., but whose work in rebuilding the temple and the city had slowed.

### **Message**

Zechariah prophesies of the future welfare of Jerusalem, its peace and prosperity, ultimately fulfilled by the Messiah, of whom explicit mention is frequently made.

### **Zechariah 1**

Zechariah calls the people of God to return to the Lord. Through two visions, the first of a horseman, the second of four horns, symbols of power, God promises that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt and its enemies destroyed.

### **Zechariah 2**

Zechariah’s third vision is of a man with a measuring line, a tool of construction, as God promises to dwell in the midst of a rebuilt Jerusalem, from which God’s grace shall be extended to the nations.

### **Zechariah 3**

Zechariah’s fourth vision is of Joshua the high priest facing Satan’s accusations of uncleanness, and hence unworthiness.

### **Zechariah 4**

Zechariah’s fifth vision is of a golden lampstand and of two olive trees, the latter representing Zerubbabel the governor and

Joshua the priest, through which by the power of the Spirit of God the work of rebuilding shall be accomplished.

### **Zechariah 5**

Zechariah's sixth vision is of a flying scroll upon which is written the curses of the law of God for sin, and his seventh vision, of a woman sitting in a measuring basket, represents wickedness, which is removed from the land.

### **Zechariah 6**

Zechariah's eighth vision, of four chariots which patrol the earth as emissaries of God's judgment; priesthood and kingship are united in Joshua the high priest, who is a type of the Messiah to come.

### **Zechariah 7**

Two years after the visions of Chapters 1–6, Zechariah is asked about continuing a fast established on the anniversary of the destruction of the temple. Zechariah points to obedience, not fasting, as the means of gaining, and disobedience as the means of forfeiting, the favor of God that they seek (verse 2).

### **Zechariah 8**

The LORD promises Jerusalem blessing instead of judgment, feasts instead of fasts, and Gentile pilgrimages in quest of the God of Israel instead of Gentile invasions.

### **Zechariah 9**

Chapters 9–11 contain oracles of judgment upon Israel's enemies. God portrays Himself in Chapter 9 as an avenging Warrior, righteous King and humble Savior, a promise ultimately fulfilled in Christ (v. 9; cf. Matthew 21:1-11).

### **Zechariah 10**

The people, and especially the leaders, of Judah are rebuked for consulting household idols. The LORD promises that He Himself shall shepherd, strengthen, and restore the people of God.

### **Zechariah 11**

Zechariah is appointed to be shepherd of God's rebellious and doomed people, and like Christ, is rejected for the price of a slave (30 pieces of silver; cf. Exodus 21:32; Jeremiah 19:1-13; Matthew 26:14-16, 27:1-10).

### **Zechariah 12**

From Chapter 12 to the end of Zechariah's prophesy the focus is the judgment of the nations and the salvation of Jerusalem. That salvation ultimately is not merely deliverance from earthly enemies, but spiritual salvation through the work of the Holy Spirit and the Messiah "whom they have pierced" (12:10; John 19:37).

### **Zechariah 13**

Zechariah announces the opening of a cleansing fountain to ride the land of false prophets and idolatry. God Himself will "strike" His own shepherd and save a remnant of His people, a prophesy fulfilled in the Good Shepherd, Jesus the Messiah (verse 7ff; Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27; Luke 2:31-34; cf. John 10:11).

### **Zechariah 14**

Zechariah announces the coming "day of the LORD," a day of battle, of judgment and salvation, of light and living water, and of the gathering of the Gentiles to worship the King, the LORD of hosts.



### Author

It is generally believed that Malachi was written by the prophet whose name the book bears. However, because “Malachi” means “my messenger,” it may be that the author is unknown.

### Date & Occasion

Malachi was written during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, either between the arrival of Ezra (458 B.C.) and the arrival of Nehemiah (445 B.C.), or the period between Nehemiah’s two visits (about 433 B.C.). Either way, it is addressed to the exiles newly returned from Babylon, struggling to re-establish themselves in the land. This is also the period when the Athenian Empire was at its height.

### Message

Malachi is addressed to a discouraged and doubting people who in their disillusionment have grown indifferent to their covenantal obligations and have broken faith with God. Note the “disputational” style of accusation and response. Malachi comes to them as a covenant advocate or enforcer, leveling six charges against the people of God through which he urges them to covenant faithfulness. It contains some of the best known predictions of the advent of Messiah (3:1,2; 4:2-6).

### Malachi 1

The LORD affirms His love for His people (1:1-5), but rebukes the priests of profaning the altar with impure offerings (1:6-14).

### Malachi 2:1-16

Israel is rebuked for covenantal unfaithfulness: specifically, the priests for violating the covenant with Levi (2:1-9) and the people for violating the covenant of marriage through taking foreign wives (2:10-12) and by divorcing their Israelite wives (2:13-16).

### **Malachi 2:17–3:12**

The LORD answers the cynical charge that He fails to distinguish between good and evil and is guilty of injustice (2:17) by warning of a coming purge through His Messenger (3:1-5), and identifying the true source of Israel's deprivations, its faithlessness (3:6-12).

### **Malachi 3:13–4:6**

The LORD answers the accusation that it is useless to serve Him by promising that those who fear Him shall be spared on the day of the LORD, and promising again a Messenger, an Elijah, ultimately fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14; 17:10; Mark 9:11-3; Luke 1:170, who will call for repentance before that great day.

## **Introduction to the Gospels & Acts**

The four gospels and Acts are the historical narratives of New Testament. Sometimes compared to the five books of Moses, or even to the consecutive historical narrative that stretches from Genesis to Nehemiah, the gospels and Acts provide us with the record of Jesus' life and His "continuing acts" through the apostolic church.

The first three gospels record many of the same events and teaching, and are called the "synoptic" gospels. John's gospel stands alone, and Luke, the "beloved physician," is author of both the gospel that bears his name and Acts.

Why are there four gospels rather than one? We are not told but can only observe that it is so, and conclude that God was pleased to enrich us in our knowledge of Jesus by teaching us from four perspectives rather than one, the book of Acts even providing a fifth.



## **Matthew**

### **Author**

According to tradition, the author of Matthew is the disciple whose name it bears, also called Levi (9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17), though in fact the author is not identified.

### **Date & Occasion**

The opinions of the scholars range from 50 to 100 A.D., but it is likely to have been written before the fall of Jerusalem, sometime between 64 and 70 A.D. Because the church father Ignatius of Antioch is the earliest author to quote Matthew, there is reason to believe that it was for the Antioch church that Matthew originally composed his gospel.

### **Message**

Matthew focuses on demonstrating that Jesus is the Messiah predicted by the Hebrew Scriptures. If Mark presents the Gentile Messiah, Matthew presents the Jewish. Repeatedly he cites Old Testament texts in order to show that Jesus fulfills its prophecies. He presents Jesus' teaching in five major discourses: The Sermon on the Mount (5-7), Mission (10), Parables (13), the church (18), and Olivette (24,25).

### **Matthew 1**

Chapter 1 is a kind of prologue to the gospel, providing Jesus' genealogy from Abraham through David to Joseph, his legal father (verses 1-17) and recording Jesus' birth (verses 17-24).

### **Matthew 2**

The visit of the Magi, the flight of the holy family to Egypt, and their return to Galilee.

### **Matthew 3**

John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus.

### **Matthew 4**

Jesus is tempted in the wilderness and begins his public ministry.

### **Matthew 5:1-20**

Chapters 5–7 record the Sermon on the Mount, beginning with the Beatitudes and Jesus’ affirmation of the Law and its righteousness.

### **Matthew 5:21-48**

Jesus continues His Sermon on the Mount interpreting the true intent of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments, and the command to love one’s neighbor.

### **Matthew 6:1-18**

Jesus teaches the Lord’s Prayer and the practice of piety, as He continues His Sermon on the Mount.

### **Matthew 6:19-34**

As the Sermon on the Mount continues, Jesus teaches us to seek not treasures on earth but to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

### **Matthew 7**

Jesus concludes His Sermon on the Mount.

### **Matthew 8**

Jesus heals the sick, He calms a storm, casts out demons, and commands, “Follow me” (v. 22).

### **Matthew 9**

Jesus continues to heal the sick, raises a young girl from the dead and encounters His first opposition.

### **Matthew 10**

Jesus instructs and sends His 12 disciples to teach and preach in the cities of Judea.

### **Matthew 11**

Jesus confirms His own identity as Messiah and that of John the Baptist as the Messiah’s forerunner; and He condemns the cities of Galilee for not receiving their message.

### **Matthew 12:1-21**

Jesus declares that He is Lord of the Sabbath.

### **Matthew 12:22-50**

Jesus warns His detractors against blaspheming the Holy Spirit, against seeking signs, and identifies His true family.

### **Matthew 13:1-30**

Jesus teaches His disciples in parables: the Sower, the Wheat & the Tares.

### **Matthew 13:31-58**

Jesus continues teaching in parables: the Mustard Seed, Leaven, Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Price, Dragnet, and the Householder.

### **Matthew 14**

Jesus responds to the death of John the Baptist: He prays, heals the sick, feeds the 5000, walks on water.

### **Matthew 15**

Jesus disputes with the Pharisees over tradition and the nature of true defilement; He heals many and feeds the 4000.

### **Matthew 16**

Conflict with the Pharisees, now joined by their traditional rivals the Sadducees, continues; Peter's confession of Christ is followed by Christ's rebuke of Peter and a call to self-denial and cross-bearing.

### **Matthew 17**

The transfiguration, a healing, and the question of the temple tax.

### **Matthew 18**

The character and authority of the church. (The question of greatness, the Parable of the Lost Sheep, procedure when sinned against, and the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.)

## **Matthew 19**

As Jesus begins His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, He establishes standards for His disciples regarding marriage, children, and wealth.

## **Matthew 20:1-19**

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard and Jesus' third prediction of His death and resurrection.

## **Matthew 20:20-34**

Jesus identifies true greatness with service and heals two blind men.

## **Matthew 21:1-23**

Jesus' "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem, His cleansing of the temple, and His cursing of a fig tree.

## **Matthew 21:24-46**

Jesus' authority is challenged as He enters the temple. He responds with the Parables of the Two Sons and of the Wicked Tenants.

## **Matthew 22:1-14**

The Parable of the Wedding Feast.

## **Matthew 22:15-46**

Jesus disputes with the Pharisees and Sadducees regarding various questions: paying taxes to Caesar, the resurrection, the greatest commandment, and the identity of David's son in Psalm 110:1.

## **Matthew 23**

Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees with seven woes, and laments Jerusalem's unbelief.

## **Matthew 24:1-35**

The "Olivet discourse," Jesus describes the signs surrounding His "coming" in judgment to destroy Jerusalem.

**Matthew 24:36–25:13**

As the “Olivet discourse” continues, Jesus describes His second coming and urges readiness, illustrated through the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

**Matthew 25:14-46**

The conclusion of the “Olivet discourse,” the theme of readiness continues through the Parable of the Talents and the description of final judgment.

**Matthew 26:1-35**

As the plot to kill Jesus gains momentum, Jesus is anointed for burial, institutes the Lord’s Supper, and foretells Peter’s denial.

**Matthew 26:36-75**

Jesus prays in Gethsemane; is betrayed by Judas; is arrested, tried and condemned before Caiaphas the high priest, and is denied by Peter.

**Matthew 27:1-31**

Jesus is tried before Pilate and sentenced; He is delivered to be crucified; and mocked by His executioners.

**Matthew 27:32-66**

The crucifixion of Jesus, His death and burial, and the securing of His tomb.

**Matthew 28**

The resurrection of Jesus and His “Great Commission.”



## Author

Though the author is anonymous, the name of John Mark has been associated with this gospel from nearly the beginning. It is found on many ancient manuscripts and is cited by a number of 2<sup>nd</sup> century church fathers such as Papias (A.D. 140), Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), and Irenaeus (A.D. 185). Papias may have been the first to refer to Mark as Peter's :interpreter,; though many commentators since have been a connection between Peter and Mark's gospel.

## Date & Occasion

Fixing a date for Mark has proven difficult though it is likely to have been written before 70 A.D. Beginning with the church fathers, commentators have identified Mark as a :Gentile gospel,; addressed to the church in Rome. It includes translations of Semitic terms (3:17; 5:41; 15:22), and explanations of Jewish customs (7:2-4; 15:42) which would not be necessary for a Jewish audience.

## Message

Mark presents a concise (it is the shortest of the gospels) and simplified account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, though at times with expanded historical details. Mark often includes first-hand impressions of Jesus the man, His responses, gestures, looks, actions, and so forth. It leads us to confess with the Gentile centurion, :Truly this man was the Son of God: (15:39).

## Mark 1:1-20

Mark's Gospel begins not with the birth of Jesus (an account of which it does not contain), but with the witness of the Old Testament and of John the Baptist to Jesus (verses 1-11), His temptation, and the beginning of His ministry in Galilee (verses 12-20).

### **Mark 1:21-45**

Jesus teaches, heals, and prays throughout Galilee and His fame spreads throughout the region.

### **Mark 2**

Jesus demonstrates His authority to forgive sins and to establish religious norms in connection with food, fasting, and the Sabbath.

### **Mark 3**

Jesus identifies His apostles and His true family.

### **Mark 4:1-34**

Jesus teaches in parables.

### **Mark 4:35–5:20**

Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee and enters into the Gentile region of Decapolis. As He does so, He performs works of power, demonstrates His authority over nature and the demonic.

### **Mark 5:21-43**

Back in Galilee, Jesus heals a woman with a long-term affliction and raises a girl from the dead.

### **Mark 6:1-44**

Jesus' ministry in Galilee continues, culminating in the feeding of the 5000 and walking on water.

### **Mark 6:45–7:37**

Jesus again crosses over the Sea of Galilee and ministers in Gentile regions of Gennesaret, Tyre, Sidon, and Decapolis.

### **Mark 8**

Jesus continues ministering to Gentile regions of Decapolis, where he feeds the 4000, Dalmanutha, Bethsaida, and Caesarea Philippi, where Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ.

### **Mark 8:1-30**

As Jesus continues to minister among the Gentiles, he feeds the 4000, spars with the Pharisees, and receives Peter's confession that He is the Christ.

### **Mark 8:31–9:29**

Verse 31 of chapter 8 marks the turning point in Jesus' ministry as He heads inexorably to Jerusalem and the cross, revealing Himself and His mission with increasing clarity as He goes.

### **Mark 9:30-50**

Jesus returns to Capernium and concludes His ministry in Galilee.

### **Mark 10:1-31**

Leaving Galilee for the final time, Jesus enters Judea as He begins the journey to Jerusalem and the cross.

### **Mark 10:1-31**

As Jesus enters Judea on His way to Jerusalem and the cross, He teaches the disciples about marriage and divorce, children and the kingdom, and the difficulty with which the rich enter the kingdom of God.

### **Mark 10:32-52**

Jesus continues the journey south to Jerusalem, entering Jericho, where he heals blind Bartimaeus.

### **Mark 10:32-52**

Continuing on the road to Jerusalem, Jesus foretells His death and resurrection a third time and heals blind Bartimaeus.

### **Mark 11**

The :Triumphal Entry: of Jesus into Jerusalem, His cursing of the fig tree, and cleansing of the temple.

### **Mark 12:1-27**

Jesus spars with the various religious authorities in Jerusalem: chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, who seek to arrest Him.

### **Mark 12:28-44**

Jesus continues to debate and teach in the temple in Jerusalem.

### **Mark 13**

The :Olivet Discourse:: Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem (verses 6-31) and the circumstances of His return (verses 32-36).

### **Mark 14:1-31**

Wednesday of Passion Week, the religious leaders and Judas plot against Jesus while He observes His :Last Supper: with His disciples, and institutes the Lord's Supper.

### **Mark 14:32-72**

Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, is betrayed, arrested, tried by the Sanhedrin, condemned, and denied even by Peter.

### **Mark 15**

Jesus is tried by Pilate, crucified, dies, and is buried.

### **Mark 16**

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the Great Commission.

## Author

According to Scriptural evidence and tradition, Luke, traveling companion of the Apostle Paul on some of his journeys, was the author of Luke and Acts. A native of Antioch, the Apostle Paul calls him “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14). His writing style indicates that he was a cultured, well-educated man.

## Date & Occasion

Given that Acts ends with the Apostle Paul still under house arrest in Rome, Luke and Acts are likely to have been written about 63 A.D., before Paul had been released or executed.

## Message

Luke’s stated purpose is to provide an accurate and “orderly account” of the ministry of Jesus so that Theophilus (to whom the book is dedicated) and others may have “certainty” about what they believe (verse 1). If Mark emphasizes the *human* Christ, Luke emphasizes the *humanitarian* Christ, giving special attention to Jesus’ concern for society’s outcasts—women, children, Gentiles, “sinners,” and the poor. Emphasis is given to prayer (nine of Jesus’ prayers are included) and the parables, 16 of which are unique to Luke.

### Luke 1:1-24

Luke dedicates his gospel to Theophilus, and the birth of John the Baptist is foretold.

### Luke 1:26-56

The birth of Jesus foretold and Mary’s response of praise, known by its Latin name as the *Magnificat*.

### Luke 1:57-81

The birth of John the Baptist and the response of his father, commonly called by its Latin name, the *Benedictus*.

**Luke 2:1-21**

The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, its announcement to shepherds, and the angelic *Gloria in Excelsis*.

**Luke 2:22-52**

The infant Jesus is presented in the temple, Simeon's response, known by its Latin title as the *Nunc Dimittis* (2:29-32), and the account of Jesus' visit to the temple at age 12.

**Luke 3**

The ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, and Jesus' genealogy back to Adam.

**Luke 4:1-30**

The temptation of Jesus and the beginning of His Galilean ministry; His rejection in His home town of Nazareth.

**Luke 4:31-44**

Jesus heals many in Capernaum, casts out demons, and teaches with authority.

**Luke 5:1-26**

Jesus continues teaching and healing in Galilee, and calls His disciples to be "fishers of men."

**Luke 5:27-6:11**

Jesus challenges common assumptions regarding associating with "sinners," fasting, and Sabbath observance.

**Luke 6:12-36**

Jesus chooses His twelve apostles, and preaches His "Sermon on the Plain" (verse 17), a sermon similar to but different from the "Sermon on the Mount" found in Matthew's Gospel.

**Luke 6:37-49**

Jesus concludes His "Sermon on the Plain."

**Luke 7:1-23**

A centurion's servant is healed and a widow's son is raised from the dead; John's question regarding Jesus' identity is answered.

**Luke 7:24-50**

Jesus reveals the identity of John the Baptist and commends his ministry; a sinful woman is forgiven.

**Luke 8:1-25**

Jesus' Galilean ministry continues as he teaches in parables and calms a storm.

**Luke 8:26-56**

Jesus heals the Gerasene demoniac, a woman with an affliction of 12 years duration, and raises Jairus' daughter from the dead.

**Luke 9:1-27**

Jesus sends out the twelve, feeds the 5000 and receives Peter's confession that He is the Christ.

**Luke 9:28-60**

The Transfiguration, and the conclusion of Jesus' Galilean ministry as He begins, in verse 51, his long journey towards the cross, having "set His face" to Jerusalem.

**Luke 10:1-20**

Jesus sends out the seventy to minister.

**Luke 10:21-41**

Jesus teaches the sovereignty of the Father and Spirit in Their self-revelation, delivers the Parable of the Good Samaritan to a self-righteous lawyer, and calms a flustered Martha.

**Luke 11:1-28**

Jesus teaches His disciples to pray and insists that a house divided cannot stand.

### **Luke 11:29-54**

Jesus warns His generation of its unbelief and denounces the Pharisees and lawyers.

### **Luke 12:1-34**

As Jesus continues His long, slow journey to Jerusalem, He underscores the necessity of confessing the Son of Man before men, of the dangers of riches and the importance of seeking first the kingdom of God.

### **Luke 12:35-59**

Jesus teaches His disciples to be prepared for His return through faithful service.

### **Luke 13**

Jesus warns of judgment, teaches about the kingdom of God and laments over Jerusalem's unbelief.

### **Luke 14**

As Jesus continues His journey to Jerusalem and the cross (toward which He set His face, we were told, in 9:51), His conflict with the Pharisees intensifies as He teaches the Parables of the Wedding Feast, of the Great Banquet, and recounts the cost of discipleship.

### **Luke 15**

The Parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost or Prodigal Son,

### **Luke 16**

The Parables of the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man & Lazarus, and related teachings.

### **Luke 17**

As Jesus continues His journey to Jerusalem, He teaches lessons on temptation, forgiveness, faith, service, gratitude, and the coming of the kingdom of God.

**Luke 18:1-17**

Parables of the Persistent Widow and of the Pharisee & the Tax Collector, and His blessing of infants.

**Luke 18:18-43**

Jesus' teachings in response to encounters with the rich young ruler, and a blind beggar.

**Luke 19:1-27**

As Jesus' journey into Jerusalem comes to a close, He enters Jericho, about 10 miles to the east, where he encounters Zaccheus, and teaches the Parable of the Ten Talents.

**Luke 19:28-48**

The long journey to Jerusalem begun in 9:51 concludes with the Triumphal Entry and the cleansing of the Temple.

**Luke 20:1-18**

Now in Jerusalem, the last week of his earthly ministry, Jesus is challenged by the religious and political authorities and teaches the Parable of the Vine-Growers.

**Luke 20:19-47**

Jesus fields the questions of the religious and political authorities in Jerusalem in the last week of his earthly ministry.

**Luke 21**

While teaching at the temple Jesus prophesies of its destruction.

**Luke 22:1-38**

Jesus and His disciples observe the Passover, their Last Supper, at which Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper, even as Judas plots to betray Him.

**Luke 22:39-71**

Jesus prays at Gethsemane, is betrayed by Judas, arrested, denied by Peter, and condemned by the Sanhedrin.

**Luke 23:1-25**

Jesus is tried, condemned, and sentenced by Pilate.

**Luke 23:26-56**

Jesus is crucified and buried.

**Luke 24:1-27**

The resurrection of Jesus and His appearance to His disciples on the Emmaus Road.

**Luke 24:28-53**

Jesus continues on the Emmaus Road, appears to the other disciples in Jerusalem, and ascends into heaven.

## Author

The church's tradition is that John, the son of Zebedee, the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (13:23) is the author of the fourth gospel. Though anonymous, there are a number of hints in the text that support the tradition that long ago assigned John's name to it.

## Date & Occasion

Early church tradition, now supported by modern scholarship, understood that John wrote his gospel toward the end of his life, around 90 A.D. Some scholars have even assigned an earlier date, before 70 A.D. John himself describes the purpose of his writing:

*... that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:31)

## Message

Beginning with the Prologue (1:1-14) and continuing with personal encounters (e.g. Nicodemus, woman at the well, woman caught in adultery, man born blind, Lazarus) and the "I am" statements (e.g. bread of life, good shepherd, resurrection and life, light of world, etc.), John demonstrates that the eternal word became flesh and dwelt among us in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Its message may be summarized by its most famous verse:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16 KJV)

Clement of Alexandria (c.150–c.215) labeled John "the spiritual gospel."

## John 1:1-18

John's prologue of praise to the eternal word who became flesh.

**John 1:19-51**

The baptism of Jesus and the calling of the first disciples.

**John 2**

Jesus turns the water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee and cleanses the temple.

**John 3**

Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born again.

**John 4:1-26**

Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well that God must be worshiped in “spirit and truth” (verses 23,24).

**John 4:27-54**

Following Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well the Samaritans confess that Jesus is “the Savior of the World” (verse 42).

**John 5:1-18**

Jesus heals on the Sabbath.

**John 5:19-46**

Jesus’ authority and the witnesses to His identity.

**John 6:1-34**

Jesus feeds the 5000 and walks on water.

**John 6:35-71**

Following the feeding of the 5000 Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.”

**John 7:1-24**

Jesus slips into Jerusalem during the Feast of Booths and begins teaching in the Temple.

### **John 7:25-52**

As Jesus teaches in the Temple during the Feast of Booths, He declares, “If any many thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (v. 37).

### **John 8:1-30**

After spending the night at the Mount of Olives, Jesus returns to the temple the following day. He encounters the woman caught in adultery and declares, “I am the light of the world” (v. 12).

### **John 8:31-59**

Continuing to teach at the temple during the Feast of Booths, Jesus speaks of the truth that sets free and declares, “before Abraham was, I am” (vv. 32,58).

### **John 9:1-17**

Jesus heals a man born blind.

### **John 9:18-41**

The Jewish leaders continue their investigation of the healing of the man born blind.

### **John 10:1-21**

Still in Jerusalem, Jesus identifies Himself as the Door and the “Good Shepherd” who lays down His life for the sheep (vv. 7,9,11,14).

### **John 10:22-42**

Jesus concludes His time in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication or Hanukkah, celebrated in December, announcing “I and the Father are one” (v. 30). Jesus is forced to leave Jerusalem for the region beyond the Jordan.

### **John 11:1-25**

As Jesus approaches the tomb of Lazarus in Bethany He announces, “I am the resurrection and the life” (v. 27).

### **John 11:26-57**

Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. In response, the chief priests and Pharisees plot His death.

### **John 12:1-26**

Jesus is anointed for burial and enters triumphantly into Jerusalem.

### **John 12:27-50**

Following His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus announces that the hour has come when He must be “lifted up,” that He might draw all people to Himself (v. 32).

### **John 13:1-20**

Chapters 13-17 record the ministry of Jesus in the “Upper Room,” on the eve of His death. In verses 1-20 Jesus washes the disciples’ feet.

### **John 13:21-38**

After washing the disciples’ feet Jesus gives the new commandment, that they should “love one another” (verses 34,35).

### **John 14**

Speaking from the “Upper Room,” Jesus promises His disciples, who are troubled by the news of His imminent departure, a room in His Father’s house, the help of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and His peace.

### **John 15**

Continuing in the “Upper Room,” Jesus announces He is the “true Vine,” commands His disciples to love one another, and warns of the hatred of the world.

### **John 16**

Jesus continues His “Upper Room Discourse,” warning of His imminent departure, yet promising to send the “Helper,” the “Spirit of Truth.”

## **John 17**

Jesus concludes his “Upper Room” ministry with His “High Priestly Prayer.”

## **John 18:1-27**

Jesus is betrayed, arrested, denied by Peter, and questioned by the High Priest.

## **John 18:28-40**

Jesus is tried by Pilate and declares, “My kingdom is not of this world” (v. 36).

## **John 19:1-22**

Jesus is beaten, mocked, and crucified.

## **John 19:23-42**

Jesus suffers, dies, and is buried.

## **John 20**

Jesus is raised from the dead on the first day of the week and appears to Mary Magdalene and the disciples culminating in Thomas’ confession the following Sunday, “My Lord and My God!” (v. 28).

## **John 21**

Jesus appears to the disciples a third time and commissions Peter to “feed My sheep” (verses 15,16,17).

## **Conclusion**

This ends the reading of the fourth gospel, written, says John, “*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name*” (20:31).



### **Author**

According to tradition and the writings of the church fathers (e.g. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexander, Eusebius), Luke the physician, traveling companion of the Apostle Paul on his second and third missionary journeys, and author of the gospel by his name, wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The author's writing style and skill indicates that he was probably a highly educated Gentile.

### **Date & Occasion**

The most likely date is prior to 70 A.D. This is supported by the fact that chapter 28 ends with the Apostle Paul under house arrest and free to preach to those who visit him.

This places the date of writing before 64 A.D., when persecution broke out as Nero blamed the great fire of Rome on Christians, and 68 A.D. when the Apostle Paul was martyred.

Acts, like Luke, is addressed to Theophilus and carries the same purpose: to provide an "orderly account" of Jesus' earthly ministry so as to inspire "certainty" or confidence in the things believed (Luke 1:1-4). Luke's gospel presents "all that Jesus *began* to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). Acts covers what Jesus *continued* to do and teach upon His ascension through His apostles.

### **Message**

Acts provides the narrative account of the development of the early church as it carries out its mission in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

### **Acts 1:1-14**

Jesus' final instructions to His disciples, and His ascension into heaven.

### **Acts 1:15-26**

A replacement for Judas Iscariot is selected.

**Acts 2**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the first Christian sermon.

**Acts 3**

Healing of the lame beggar and the Apostle Peter's second sermon.

**Acts 4**

The religious leaders arrest, threaten, and release Peter and John, who report of their experience to the assembled church.

**Acts 5:1-16**

The deception and deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, and subsequent growth of the church.

**Acts 5:17-42**

The religious authorities in Jerusalem again imprison and threaten the apostles, who, once more, refuse to comply choosing to "obey God rather than men" (v. 29).

**Acts 6**

Seven men are chosen to assist the apostles.

**Acts 7:1-34**

Stephen's defense of the gospel before the religious authorities in Jerusalem.

**Acts 7:35-60**

Stephen concludes his defense of the gospel and becomes the first Christian martyr.

**Acts 8:1-24**

The "Samaritan Pentecost" and "conversion" of Simon the magician.

**Acts 8:25-40**

The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch.

**Acts 9:1-19a**

The conversion of the Apostle Paul.

**Acts 9:19b-43**

The Apostle Paul's early ministry in Damascus & Jerusalem; Peter heals Aeneas and raises Tabitha from the dead.

**Acts 10:1-23a**

The visions of the Roman centurion Cornelius and the Apostle Peter indicating the end of the Old Testament dietary restrictions.

**Acts 10:23b-48**

The "Gentile Pentecost" and the baptism of the uncircumcised.

**Acts 11**

The Apostle Peter's vision of the cleansing of unclean animals repeated a second time to church leaders in Jerusalem; the gospel received by Greeks in Antioch.

**Acts 12**

The Apostle Peter is rescued from prison by an angel of the Lord and rejoins the saints assembled for prayer.

**Acts 13:1-16**

Chapter 13 marks the beginning of intentional missionary outreach to Gentiles. The church at Antioch sends the Apostle Paul and Barnabas on his "first missionary journey," preaching the gospel to the synagogues of the cities of the Galatian region of south-central Asia Minor.

**Acts 13:16-52**

The Apostle Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch at the outset of his first missionary journey.

**Acts 14**

The Apostle Paul and Barnabas travel from Pisidian Antioch in central Asia Minor, 80 miles southeast to Iconium, on to Lystra

and Derbe, and then retrace their steps back to Syrian Antioch from which they began, completing the first missionary journey.

**Acts 15:1-21**

The first church council is called to meet in Jerusalem to determine if Gentile converts to Christianity must also submit to the ceremonial laws of Moses, particularly circumcision.

**Acts 15:22-41**

The Council at Jerusalem agrees to send to the churches by the hand of Paul a record of their decision regarding Gentiles and the ceremonial law.

**Acts 16:1-21**

The Apostle Paul begins his “second missionary journey” accompanied by Timothy, aiming to revisit the churches established in Asia Minor on his first missionary journey. At Troas, in north-western Asia Minor (Turkey) he receives his “Macedonian call” to “come and help us” (verse 9), extending the church’s missionary effort into Europe for the first time.

**Acts 16:22-40**

The release of Paul and Silas from prison and the conversion of the Philippian jailer.

**Acts 17:1-15**

The Apostle Paul’s journeys to Thessalonica and Berea.

**Acts 17:16-34**

The Apostle Paul in Athens.

**Acts 18:1-22**

The Apostle Paul travels from Athens south to Corinth, then back across the Aegean Sea to his home base at Syrian Antioch, completing his “second missionary journey.”

**Acts 18:23–19:20**

Verse 23 marks the beginning of the Apostle Paul’s “third missionary journey.” The Apostle Paul travels from Galatia, in

central Asia Minor, to Ephesus along the coast where he remains for two years, ministering with great effect and controversy.

#### **Acts 19:21-41**

After two years of ministry in Ephesus in which “the word of the Lord was growing mighty and prevailing” (v. 20), a riot erupts in response to the Apostle Paul’s teaching.

#### **Acts 20:1-16**

Continuing his third missionary journey, the Apostle Paul travels from Ephesus, along the coast of Asia Minor, to Macedonia and Greece, visiting churches as he goes. Determined to journey to Jerusalem, he reverses his course back through Macedonia, northern Asia Minor, and to Miletus along coastal southern Asia Minor, 30 miles south of Ephesus, and sends for and addresses the Ephesian elders.

#### **Acts 20:17-38**

With Jerusalem as his destination on the concluding leg of his third missionary journey, the Apostle Paul stops in Miletus in coastal southern Asia Minor, where he meets with the elders of the church at Ephesus, to whom he delivers his final farewell.

#### **Acts 21:1-36**

The Apostle Paul continues his journey to Jerusalem, sailing from Patria in southern Asia Minor across the eastern Mediterranean to Tyre, 150 miles north of Jerusalem, sails further south to Caesarea, and completes the journey by land in verse 15.

#### **Acts 21:37–22:30**

The Apostle Paul defends the gospel from the stairs of the Antonian Fortress before a mob in Jerusalem.

#### **Acts 23:1-11**

The Apostle Paul gives testimony before the Jewish Council by order of the Roman authorities.

### **Acts 23:12-35**

The Apostle Paul is taken by armed escort to Felix, the provincial governor in Caesarea, 100 miles north of Jerusalem.

### **Acts 24**

The Apostle Paul defends his prior actions in Jerusalem before the provincial governor in Caesarea, Felix, who keeps him in custody for two years.

### **Acts 25**

The Apostle Paul, charged with crimes by the Jewish authorities before the new provincial governor, Festus, appeals to Caesar.

### **Acts 26**

Still held in custody by Festus, the provincial governor, the Apostle Paul defends his gospel before King Herod Agrippa II (A.D.27–c.100).

### **Acts 27**

The Apostle Paul begins his journey to Rome to be tried by Caesar.

### **Acts 28:1-16**

Following his shipwreck and a 3-month stay on the island of Malta, the Apostle Paul sails under custody to the central western coast of Italy, and travels the remaining 250 miles by land to Rome, where he is kept under house arrest for 2 years.

### **Acts 28:17-31**

The Apostle Paul speaks to the Jewish leaders in Rome, with largely negative results, and so turns to the Gentiles. For two years under house arrest he preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Introduction to the Epistles**

There are 21 epistles or letters in the New Testament written by the Apostles to churches or individuals. They follow roughly the form of letter writing then common in the Hellenistic world: greetings, body, and conclusion. The body of the epistles are taken up with instructions on various issues that had arisen in the churches. Traditionally they have been divided into two categories:

Paul's Epistles (including his Prison Epistles [Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon] and Pastoral Epistles [1 & 2 Timothy, Titus])

General Epistles (Hebrews, 1 & 2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude, Revelation)



### **Author**

The Apostle Paul, the former Saul of Tarsus, citizen of Rome, one-time zealot for Judaism, a “Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee of the Pharisees,” educated by Gamaliel (the leading rabbi of the day) and converted to Christ on the Damascus Road, is the author of the epistle to the Romans.

### **Date & Occasion**

Romans was probably written from Corinth just prior to the Apostle Paul’s visit to Jerusalem with a monetary gift from the Gentile churches (15:25; Acts 24:17), sometime between the end of 55 AD and the early months of 57 AD. He had long desired to visit the Roman Christians, a mixed church of Gentiles and Jews whose origins are unknown. After delivering the gift to Jerusalem, it was the Apostle Paul’s desire to move from the eastern to the western Mediterranean, to Rome and on to Spain (15:24). He writes to explain his gospel in anticipation of his visit.

### **Message**

Romans is the New Testament’s most systematic and comprehensive presentation of the Christian gospel. All of the major themes, from sin, to Christ and the atonement, to the Holy Spirit and the application of redemption (election, justification, adoption, sanctification, presentation, glorification), law, the meaning of the Old Testament, the Christian life, and eschatology. It has exercised decisive influence upon church leaders such as John Chrysostom (349–407), Augustine, Luther, and all the Protestant Reformers, John Wesley, and in modern times, Karl Barth (1886–1968). Its message is vital for us today.

### **Romans 1:1-17**

Greetings and introduction to the theme of the epistle: “The righteous shall live by faith” (v. 17).

### **Romans 1:18-32**

The universality of human sinfulness demonstrated in the idolatry and immorality of the Gentiles.

### **Romans 2:1-16**

The universal, righteous, and impartial justice of God.

### **Romans 2:17-29**

The universality of human sinfulness demonstrated in Jewish failure to keep the law which they are privileged to have.

### **Romans 3:1-20**

The argument of chapters 1 and 2 is summarized and concluded: “both Jews and Greeks are under sin,” (v. 9) and every mouth is closed (v. 19).

### **Romans 3:21-31**

The universal problem of human guilt demonstrated in 1:18–3:20 is answered: righteousness is a gift of God given through faith in Christ.

### **Romans 4**

The case for justification by faith is proven in the life of Abraham, who was justified while uncircumcised and so that he might be the father of all who believe.

### **Romans 5**

The fruit of justification described: peace with God, hope, love, and reconciliation. In verses 12-21 Adam and Christ are contrasted.

### **Romans 6**

Focus shifts in chapter 6 from justification (3:21-5:21) to sanctification. Union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection mean new life, freedom from bondage to sin, and freedom to serve God’s righteousness.

## **Romans 7**

The Christian's freedom from the law's condemnation (verses 1-13) and the fight of faith (verses 14-25).

## **Romans 8:1-17**

The Christian's new life and freedom in the Spirit.

## **Romans 8:18-39**

The certainty of redemption's completion is rooted in God's love and the Spirit's intercession: The "Golden Chain" of predestination, call, justification, adoption, sanctification, preservation, glorification is described.

## **Romans 9**

Romans 9–11 take up the question of Israel's unbelief. The answer of chapter 9 is election: not all Israel is Israel.

## **Romans 10**

Righteousness for both Jew and Gentile is attained only by faith in Christ.

## **Romans 11:1-16**

God has not rejected Israel but has preserved a believing remnant.

## **Romans 11:17-36**

Israel is likened to an olive tree with a believing Patriarchal root and unbelieving contemporary Jewish branches, which have been broken off while wild olive shoots, Gentiles, have been grafted in, all according to God's gracious purposes in election.

## **Romans 12**

The "therefore" of verse 1 marks a major transition in his epistle as the Apostle Paul moves from the doctrines of chapters 1–11 to Christian practice in chapters 12–16. Chapter 12 focuses on the church as a "body" and the mutual obligations of members.

### **Romans 13**

The Christian's outlook and obligations to the civil government (verses 1-7) and to fulfill the law through love (verses 8-14).

### **Romans 14**

Christian liberty and charity in things indifferent.

### **Romans 15:1-13**

The selflessness of Christ an example for believers to follow.

### **Romans 15:14-33**

The Apostle Paul's ministry to the Gentiles and plans to visit Rome, and from there, Spain.

### **Romans 16**

Personal greetings, final instructions, and concluding doxology.

## **1 Corinthians**

### **Author**

The first verse of 1 Corinthians identifies the Apostle Paul as the author. Paul, whose given name was Saul, was reared in an affluent Jewish family in Tarsus, educated by the leading rabbi of the day, Gamaliel, and was a zealous Pharisee, the strictest sect of Judaism. He was converted to Christ dramatically on the road to Damascus on which he was traveling in order to persecute Christians, and called by Christ to be His apostle to the Gentiles.

### **Date & Occasion**

This epistle was written on the Apostle Paul's third mission journey (A.D. 53-57), while in Ephesus in central coastal Asia Minor, during his two-year ministry there, an account of which is recorded in Acts 19. It was probably written about 55 A.D. to address serious problems that had developed in the Corinthian congregation, which the Apostle Paul had founded on his second mission journey (Acts 18:1-11): division, spiritual pride, sexual immorality, Christian liberty issues, abuse of the sacraments, disorder in worship services, and others.

### **Message**

The Apostle Paul's response is long but simple: humility, Christian love, and the simple preaching of the cross of Christ.

### **1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

The Apostle's salutation.

### **1 Corinthians 1:10-31**

The Apostle Paul urges unity in the church based upon the "foolishness" of the cross.

### **1 Corinthians 2**

The Apostle Paul determines to preach only Christ crucified.

### **1 Corinthians 3**

The Apostle Paul addresses the problems of factions in the church and reliance upon worldly wisdom.

### **1 Corinthians 4**

The Apostle Paul warns against unwarranted judging and worldly pride.

### **1 Corinthians 5**

The Apostle Paul denounces a case of sexual immorality in the church and demands the removal of the offending brother.

### **1 Corinthians 6**

The Apostle Paul requires that disputes between Christians be resolved by church courts not civil courts, and that they flee immorality.

### **1 Corinthians 7:1-24**

The Apostle Paul answers questions the Corinthians had raised regarding marriage, singleness, and divorce.

### **1 Corinthians 7:25-40**

The Apostle Paul concludes his counsel regarding marriage and various states of singleness

### **1 Corinthians 8**

In Chapters 8–10 the Apostle Paul answers questions raised by the Corinthians regarding eating meat that previously had been offered to idols in pagan rituals.

### **1 Corinthians 9**

The Apostle illustrates the practice of forgoing rights for the sake of the gospel from his own ministry: he surrendered his right to financial support that he might preach the gospel without charge.

### **1 Corinthians 10**

The Apostle Paul's concluding counsel regarding meat associated with pagan religious rituals: flee idolatry and seek the good of one's neighbor and glory of God in all circumstances.

### **1 Corinthians 11**

The Apostle Paul addresses first the issue of head coverings for women (verses 1-16), and then decorum in the administration of the Lord's Supper (verses 16-33).

### **1 Corinthians 12**

Instruction regarding spiritual gifts, unity, and diversity in the body of Christ.

### **1 Corinthians 13**

The Apostle Paul describes the greatest spiritual gift of all: love.

### **1 Corinthians 14:1-25**

The supremacy of prophecy and the importance of comprehension and mutual edification in the exercise of spiritual gifts.

### **1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

Order and decorum in public worship.

### **1 Corinthians 15:1-34**

The certainty and importance of the resurrection.

### **1 Corinthians 15:35-38**

The resurrection body and the victory over death.

### **1 Corinthians 16**

Final instructions and greetings.



## 2 Corinthians

### **Author**

Verse one identifies the Apostle Paul as the author of 2 Corinthians along with his traveling companion, Timothy. Paul, formerly Saul, was once a Pharisee, the strictest sect of Judaism, and a persecutor of the church. He was suddenly and dramatically converted to Christ on the Damascus Road and called to be His apostle.

### **Date & Occasion**

The Apostle Paul founded the Corinthian church on his Second Missionary journey in 51-52 A.D. (Acts 18:1-8) On his Third Missionary Journey, the Apostle stayed in Ephesus for three years, during which time messengers from Corinth came to him with questions which he answered in his “First Epistle to the Corinthians.” Some time later he made a short visit to Corinth from Ephesus to which he refers in his Second Epistle (2:1). After this second visit and before the upcoming third visit to which he refers (12:14, 13:1; and Acts 20:2,3) the Apostle Paul wrote this second epistle. He traveled from Ephesus to Troas and on to Philippi in Macedonia (2:13, 14), from which the epistle was written in about 55 A.D.

Corinth was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire, located on the Greek Peloponesia and was a rich, strategically located commercial center .

### **Message**

The Apostle Paul writes to explain his ministry and encourage the Corinthians (chapters 1-7), to urge generous gifts in support of the poor Christians in Jerusalem (chapters 8, 9), and as a defense against false apostles (chapters 10-13). As he does so, he tells as much about the gospel message, about giving and about gospel ministry.

### **2 Corinthians 1:1-11**

The Apostle Paul’s greeting and thanksgiving for God’s comfort.

## **2 Corinthians 1:12-24**

The Apostle Paul explains the change of plans which prevented an intended visit to Corinth.

## **2 Corinthians 2**

The Apostle Paul continues to provide reasons why he did not make an intended visit to Corinth. He explains that out of love he sent a letter of rebuke instead, to which the Corinthians correctly responded with church discipline.

## **2 Corinthians 3**

The Apostle Paul commends new covenant ministry not through external commendation, but through the witness of the internal transformation of believers in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

## **2 Corinthians 4**

The gospel of the glory of Christ is contrasted with the “earthen vessels” (KJV) through which it is communicated.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

The Christian ambition is to please Christ, the Christian goal is to live for Christ, and the Christian ministry is to urge reconciliation with God through Christ.

## **2 Corinthians 6**

The description of the gospel ministry of reconciliation continues (verses 1-13) along with pleas for separation from evil (verses 14-18).

## **2 Corinthians 7**

The Apostle Paul rejoices at the good news that Titus brought of the repentance of the Corinthian church.

## **2 Corinthians 8**

In chapters 8 and 9 generous giving on behalf of the poor Christians in Jerusalem is urged.

## **2 Corinthians 9**

The Corinthian Christians are encouraged to give cheerfully and bountifully on behalf of the needy church in Jerusalem.

## **2 Corinthians 10**

In chapters 10-13 the Apostle Paul defends his apostleship against the claims of false apostles. In chapter 10 he identifies the characteristics of true spiritual power (verses 1-12) and the object of Christian boasting (verses 13ff).

## **2 Corinthians 11:1-15**

The “false apostles” who preach “another Jesus” and a “different gospel” are exposed (verses 13, 4).

## **2 Corinthians 11:16-33**

The Apostle Paul begins what has been called his “Fool’s Speech,” which continues to 12:10, in which he “boasts” of that which the world considers shame.

## **2 Corinthians 12**

The Apostle Paul concludes his “Fool’s Speech,” boasting of that which the world considers weakness (verses 1-10). He continues to defend true apostleship against the claims of “super apostles” (verses 11-21)

## **2 Corinthians 13**

Final warnings and final greetings, concluding with the “Apostolic Benediction.”



### Author

Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul wrote Galatians (1:1). Born in Tarsus in Asia Minor to Jewish parents who possessed Roman citizenship, Paul was sent to Jerusalem as a young man to be educated under Gamaliel, the leading rabbi of that day. He excelled in Judaism and became what he later called “a Hebrew of Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5).

### Date & Occasion

Around 50 A.D. the church faced its first doctrinal crisis. More and more the gospel was taking root in Gentile communities around the Mediterranean. As these non-Jews came to believe in Christ and enter what heretofore had been a largely a Jewish Christian church, the question naturally arose regarding their relation to customs and traditions of Judaism. Would Gentile believers be required to keep the law of Moses, particularly its ceremonial aspects, in order to be Christians? The defining issue was circumcision. Some were teaching, as Luke reports, that “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). Other important questions included cleansing ordinances, dietary laws, and the Jewish sacred calendar (2:11 ff; 4:10ff).

In addition, the Apostle Paul himself was being attacked. More clearly and more forcefully than anyone else, Paul was teaching that Gentile Christians were free from the ceremonial requirements of Mosaic law. Consequently, both he and his gospel came under attack. His detractors denied that he was a true apostle at all.

There were two regions in ancient Asia Minor (present day Turkey) that went by the name of “Galatia.” Scholars debate whether the Apostle Paul is addressing the Northern, Celtic Galatians or the Southern Galatians. The answer one gives affects the dating of this epistle as well. Most modern scholars take the latter view though the matter cannot be resolved with certainty. Whichever is the case, Paul himself had brought the

gospel of grace to the “churches of Galatia.” He was, in some respects, their “founding pastor.”

It is difficult to date the precise time of writing. It is fairly certain that it lies between the eve of the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15, usually dated at 48 or 49 A.D., and Paul’s imprisonment recorded in Acts 21, approximately A.D. 58. Paul’s lengthy stay in Ephesus, about A.D. 52, is often cited as a likely possibility.

### **Message**

Galatians is undoubtedly the most controversial, the most polemical, and the most personal of all of the New Testament books. Because of its vigorous defense of justification by faith and the Christian’s freedom from the curse of the law, Galatians has been called the “Magna Carta of Christian liberty.” Many of the church fathers wrote commentaries on it (e.g. Chrysostom, Augustine, Victorinus, Jerome). Its influence upon Luther was particularly profound. His commentary on Galatians, published in 1519, exerted enormous influence then and repeatedly since. Charles Wesley, among others, was converted while reading it. Luther said of Galatians, “I am wedded to it,” calling it his “Katie von Bora.”

### **Galatians 1**

Salutation, denunciation of false gospels, and defense of the Apostle Paul’s authority and message.

### **Galatians 2**

The Apostle Paul continues his defense of his Apostolic authority and message.

### **Galatians 3**

The gospel of justification by faith alone in Christ alone is defended.

### **Galatians 4**

The maintenance of Gospel liberty is urged against enslaving alternatives.

## **Galatians 5**

Our freedom in Christ is not to be abandoned for slavery to the law.

## **Galatians 6**

The outworking of love and the law of Christ with recapitulation and final warnings.



# **Ephesians**

## **Author**

The Apostle Paul is identified in 1:1 and 3:1 as the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Paul, the former student of the great Rabbi Gamaliel, former Pharisee and persecutor of the church, was converted to Christ on the Damascus Road, and called by Him to be His Apostle to the Gentiles.

## **Date & Occasion**

The Apostle Paul writes from prison (3:1; 6:20), probably during the 2 year house arrest in Rome recounted in Acts 28. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and is one of the 5 most important cities of the Empire. It was also the center of the cult of the goddess Diana, in connection with which the Apostle Paul's mission sparked a riot among her devotees and the craftsmen whose livelihood depended upon it (Acts 19:23-41).

## **Message**

The contents of Ephesians closely parallels that of Colossians. It is likely that they were written at about the same time to different churches. Compared with other of the Apostle Paul's letters, this is more devotional in tone. For example, election is considered doxologically in Ephesians 1, whereas in Romans 9–11 it is considered theologically. The central theme of Ephesians is the church, God's new humanity, the bride of Christ. Ephesians was John Calvin's favorite New Testament epistle.

## **Ephesians 1:1-14**

Salutation (verses 1,2) and an extended prayer of praise for redemption, a single long sentence in Greek (verses 3-14).

## **Ephesians 1:15-23**

Thanksgiving and prayer for the Ephesian church.

## **Ephesians 2**

Salvation by grace through faith in Christ (verses 1-10) and the creation of God's new household (verses 11-22).

## **Ephesians 3**

The revelation of the mystery of the gospel and a second prayer for the Ephesian church with doxology.

## **Ephesians 4:1-16**

The unity of the church amidst a diversity of gifts.

## **Ephesians 4:17-32**

The new life of the believer: the new mind, new self, new behavior.

## **Ephesians 5:1-21**

The new walk of the believer: love, purity, light, wisdom, and the fullness of the Spirit.

## **Ephesians 5:22-6:9**

The Christian household: husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, and slaves.

## **Ephesians 6:10-24**

Christian warfare and the armor of God (verses 10-20) and final greetings (verses 21-24).

## **Philippians**

### **Author**

The Apostle Paul, the one-time Pharisee and persecutor of the church, the Damascus road convert and Apostle to the Gentiles, identifies himself as the author (1:1).

### **Date & Occasion**

The Apostle traveled to Philippi in obedience to the Macedonian Vision (Acts 16:6-10). There he established the first church on European soil. He writes to them from prison (1:12-30), perhaps the Roman prison recorded in Acts 28 around the year 61 A.D. (cf. 1:13; 4:22). Philippi was founded by Philip II of Macedon. It was strategically important both because of its gold and silver mines and because it lay on the main road connecting the eastern and western halves of the Roman empire. In 42 B.C. it was the site of a battle between Marc Antony and Octavian on one side, and Brutus and Cassius on the other. Octavian (Augustus) later made it a military colony.

### **Message**

The Apostle Paul writes for two main reasons. First, to thank the Philippians for their unflinching support; second, to provide spiritual guidance. It has been called “The Epistle of Joy.”

### **Philippians 1:1-18**

Greetings, thanksgiving, prayer, and the progress of the gospel.

### **Philippians 1:19-30**

“To live is Christ” and the privilege of Christian suffering.

### **Philippians 2:1-11**

The humility of Christ and ours. Verses 6-8, called the “hymn to Christ,” celebrates Christ’s humiliation and exaltation..

### **Philippians 2:12-30**

Christian obedience and witness, and news concerning Timothy and Epaphroditus.

### **Philippians 3**

Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not through birthright, ritual, or law (verses 1-11). Press on, the Apostle Paul urges, to the good of our heavenly citizenship (verses 12ff).

### **Philippians 4**

Final exhortations to unity, to rejoice in the Lord, to prayer, and to contentment.

## Colossians

### **Author**

Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul (1:1; 4:8) while in prison in Rome.

### **Date & Occasion**

Colossae was a city in southeastern Asia Minor located on an important trade route, 100 miles west of Ephesus. Though the Apostle Paul had never visited Colossae (2:1), it was likely that the foundation of the Colossian church was laid through his ministry in Ephesus (A.D. 53-55), when “all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord”(Acts 19:10). Epaphrus, identified as the founder of the church, joined the Apostle Paul in prison in Rome some 5-7 years later (A.D. 62-63), telling him of strange teaching that threatened the survival of the church (Acts 28; Colossians 1:7; 4:12,13). This epistle is the Apostle’s response to Epaphrus’ concerns.

### **Message**

The message of Colossians is the sufficiency of Christ and His supremacy to the world’s philosophies (2:8), to ascetic and ritual practices (2:20-23; 2:16-19), and to cosmic powers (2:8-15).

### **Colossians 1:1-14**

Salutation and prayer for the Colossians.

### **Colossians 1:15-28**

The Apostle Paul describes the preeminence of Christ, the salvation enjoyed by the Colossians, and His ministry as an Apostle.

### **Colossians 2**

The supremacy of Christ to human philosophy and tradition, to the invisible cosmic powers, and to religious asceticism and ritual.

### **Colossians 3**

Having demonstrated the theological *indicatives* of union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, the Apostle Paul urges the ethical *imperatives* which flow from that foundation.

### **Colossians 4**

The Apostle Paul concludes the ethical imperatives that flow from our union with Christ (4:1-6) and extends final greetings (4:7-18).

## 1 & 2 Thessalonians

### Author

The Apostle Paul, born Saul of Tarsus, a highly educated and devout Pharisee, one time persecutor of the church, converted to Christ on the “Damascus Road,” and called to be the “Apostle to the Gentiles.”

### Date & Occasion

The Thessalonians epistles are among the earliest of the Apostle Paul’s, written about 50 or 51 A.D. Perhaps only Galatians was written earlier.

1 Thessalonians was written from Corinth after the Apostle Paul had received a report from Timothy regarding the state of the Thessalonian congregation (3:6,7). 2 Thessalonians was written shortly thereafter. Thessalonica, located in Macedonia, was founded in 315 by King Cassander of Macedon. It was named for Cassander’s wife, Alexander’s half-sister. It became the capital of the Roman province of Macedon with a population of 200,000. During the Apostle Paul’s second missionary journey he received his “Macedonian vision” wherein a man was pleading “Come, help us” (Acts 16:9). He journeyed first to Philippi, then to Thessalonica, where his ministry lasted for a number of weeks, and resulted in a church composed primarily of Gentiles. Eventually his ministry led to a riot, and Paul, Silas, and Timothy had to be whisked away at night. From Thessalonica they traveled to Berea (Acts 17:1-9), then on to Athens and Corinth, from where he wrote these epistles.

### Message

1 Thessalonians records the Apostle Paul’s instructions to a young church and new converts regarding Christian beliefs, ethics, and ministry. Significant emphasis is given to the return of Christ. 2 Thessalonians continues the themes of 1 Thessalonians, underscoring previous teaching on the return of Christ and the importance of work. What Johann A. Bengel, 18<sup>th</sup> century German commentator said of the 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians

can be said of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians as well: “There is a kind of unmingled sweetness in this epistle.”

### **1 Thessalonians 1**

The Apostle Paul thanks God for the Thessalonian Christians and commends their faithful reception of the gospel.

### **1 Thessalonians 2**

The Apostle Paul defends his ministry in Thessalonica employing four metaphors: steward, father, mother, herald.

### **1 Thessalonians 3**

The Apostle Paul explains the certainty of Christian suffering and prays for the Thessalonians’ growth in love and holiness.

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

The Apostle Paul now exhorts the Thessalonian Christians to become that for which he prayed in chapter 3, providing instruction in holiness (verses 1-8), love (9-12), and the Second Coming (vv 13-18).

### **1 Thessalonians 5**

The Apostle Paul teaches the church regarding “the day of the Lord” (vv 1-11), provides final instructions (vv 12-22), and prays for the Thessalonians as he concludes his epistle (vv 23-28).

### **2 Thessalonians 1**

Salutations, greetings, and the promise of Christ’s saving and avenging return.

### **2 Thessalonians 2**

The revelation of the “man of lawlessness.”

### **2 Thessalonians 3**

Warnings against idleness and concluding benediction.

## 1 & 2 Timothy

### Author

The Apostle Paul is identified in the salutations of the three “Pastoral Epistles,” 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, as the author of each.

### Date & Occasion

Historians and New Testament scholars speculate that the Apostle Paul was released from the Roman imprisonment recorded in Acts in 28 in 62 A.D., launched out on a fourth missionary journey, was re-arrested and executed by Nero’s government. Since Nero died in 68 A.D., this would place the date of these epistles between 62–68 A.D., probably in the earlier part of this period, 62–64 A.D. 2 Timothy was the last of the Apostle Paul’s epistles, written just before his trial, which he anticipated would end in his execution (2 Timothy 4:6). This would place it in the latter period, between 64–68 A.D.

The epistles are addressed to Timothy, a native of Lystra in the province of Galatia in Asia Minor. Timothy was a product of a mixed marriage of Jewish mother and Gentile father, was schooled in the Hebrew Scriptures, and along with his mother and grandmother had become a Christian (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14,15).

Timothy traveled with the Apostle Paul on his 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journeys. Paul wrote 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy while on his fourth missionary journey in Macedonia to Timothy whom he had left behind in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). 2 Timothy was written during Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> imprisonment in Rome (2 Timothy 1:8; 2:9), and contains the additional instruction for Timothy to leave Ephesus and come visit him in Rome (2 Timothy 4:9,11-13,21)..

### Message

The Pastoral Epistles are written in anticipation of a time when the Apostles would have passed from the scene. They are concerned with order in the church in the post-Apostolic era:

the church's organization, officers, members, and doctrines. The Timothy epistles are also full of personal encouragement for Timothy.

**1 Timothy 1**

Salutation and warnings against false teachers; their doctrines contrasted with the true gospel.

**1 Timothy 2**

Instructions regarding public worship.

**1 Timothy 3**

Qualifications for bishop-elders (cf. Titus 1:5-7; Acts 20:17) and deacons.

**1 Timothy 4**

Admonitions to Timothy regarding his ministry.

**1 Timothy 5:1–6:2**

Further admonitions to Timothy regarding his ministry, particularly touching widows, elders, and slaves.

**1 Timothy 6:3-21**

Timothy is warned about false teachers, the dangers of wealth, and urged to guard the gospel.

**2 Timothy 1**

Greetings and admonitions to faithfulness.

**2 Timothy 2**

Wholehearted devotion urged through the use of the analogies of the soldier, the athlete, the farmer, the workman, the vessel, and the servant.

**2 Timothy 3**

Warnings against false teachers and admonitions to faithfulness.

## **2 Timothy 4**

Consistent ministry of the word is urged, personal instructions and final greetings are given, even as the Apostle Paul anticipates his impending death.



## Author

Along with the other “Pastoral Epistles,” 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus was written by the Apostle Paul.

## Date & Occasion

Like 1 Timothy, Titus was written on what is called the Apostle Paul’s “fourth missionary journey,” that is, during his travels between his first imprisonment and his 2<sup>nd</sup> and final imprisonment and execution. This fourth mission trip undertaken between 62 and 68 A.D., may have taken the Apostle to Spain (Romans 15:24,28), to Crete (Titus 1:5), north to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), perhaps to Colossae (cf. Philemon 23), and then to Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3; cf. Philippians 1:25,26). He may have gone back to Ephesus (1 Timothy 3:14,15; 4:13), and to Nicopolis (Titus 3:12), Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), Miletus, and perhaps Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20). Finally we find him back in Rome awaiting execution (2 Timothy 1:8,12; 2:9; 4:6,7,16). Paul probably wrote between 62 and 64 A.D.

Titus was a Gentile Christian, probably a convert of the Apostle Paul (Titus 1:4). Little else is known about him. He seems to have traveled with Paul on his 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journeys and on part of the fourth (Galatians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18).

Paul writes from Macedonia to Titus on Crete, where Paul had left him following their missionary activity there.

## Message

The Apostle Paul writes urging Titus to conclude his work on Crete by completing the organization of the churches (1:5-9), silencing false teachers (1:10-14; 3:9-11), and providing instruction on proper conduct (2:1-3:8). Titus provides significant insight into the order intended for the churches in the absence of the Apostles.

## **Titus 1**

Greetings and the appointment of elders for the oversight of the churches.

## **Titus 2**

Having refuted false teachers in chapter 1, sound teaching is urged in chapters 2 and 3.

## **Titus 3**

Instruction in sound doctrine and good works and final greetings.

## **Philemon**

### **Author**

Philemon was written by Paul, Christ's Apostle to the Gentiles.

### **Date & Occasion**

The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle around 60 A.D., while a prisoner in Rome. It is addressed to Philemon, a convert of the Apostle's who was a member of the church at Colossae and may have been delivered together with the Colosian epistle (cf. Colossians 4:7ff and Philemon 23). Paul writes urging Philemon to receive back his runaway slave Onesimus, who had encountered Paul in Rome and become a Christian.

### **Message**

This epistle demonstrates that the gospel transforms all human relations, as the Apostle Paul urges Philemon for Christ's sake to receive back Onesimus as more than a slave, but as a Christian brother.



## Hebrews

### Author

The author of Hebrews is anonymous. Various candidates have been proposed, including the Apostle Paul, who was the choice of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215) and Origen (c. 185–253), and whose authorship was accepted in the Eastern and Western churches from the fifth to the sixteenth centuries, Barrabas, Luke, Clement of Rome, Apollos, Epaphras, and Silas. Authorship cannot be established with certainty, though it can be said that he was schooled in the Old Testament (particularly the LXX) and wrote in a Hellenistic literary style and firmly understood Jesus as the culmination of redemptive history, fulfilling the types of the Old Testament.

### Date & Occasion

Hebrews is addressed to a church that is suffering persecution and in danger of falling away from the faith. Given the writer's arguments drawn from the Old Testament, the temple, sacrificial system, and priesthood, it is likely to be addressed to Jewish Christians who, under the pressure of rejection from the Jewish community, are tempted to turn from the hidden truths of Christianity to the concrete forms and visible institutions of Judaism. Since Hebrews seems to assume an existing sacrificial system, it would have been written before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.

### Message

The writer's message is, "don't go back!" He urges his readers to stand firm given the supremacy of Christ to all preceding revelation and all Old Testament rituals and institutions, particularly the temple, sacrifices, and priesthood. All these, he says, were temporary and incomplete, pointing ahead to a better priest, sacrifice, sanctuary, and covenant.

### Hebrews 1

The supremacy of God's Son affirmed and then demonstrated from Psalms 2, 104, 45, 102, and 110, and other Old Testament texts.

## **Hebrews 2**

Exhortation not to neglect “so great salvation” (KJV) wrought by God’s Son (verses 1-4), followed by further demonstrations of Christ’s supremacy based on Psalm 8 (verse 5 ff.) and Psalm 22 and other Old Testament passages (verses 11ff.).

## **Hebrews 3**

Jesus is shown to be superior to Moses (verses 1-6) while the church is exhorted in verses 7-19 from Psalm 95 not to fall away from God.

## **Hebrews 4**

Exhortation not to fall away from God, based on Psalm 95, continues, as the church is urged to enter God’s promised rest.

## **Hebrews 5**

Christ qualified to service as our high priest through divine appointment and suffering.

## **Hebrews 6**

Warnings against apostasy (verses 1-12) and reminders of the certainty of God’s promises (verses 13-20).

## **Hebrews 7**

Christ is the high priest promised in Psalm 110, according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Genesis 14:17-20).

## **Hebrews 8**

Christ is the high priest in the true, that is, heavenly tabernacle, and mediator of a better covenant, that promised in Jeremiah 31.

## **Hebrews 9**

The earthly and temporal tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices are unfavorably compared with the heavenly and eternal.

## **Hebrews 10:1-18**

The yearly sacrifices of the old covenant are compared with the “once for all” sacrifice of Christ (verses 12,14; cf. 9:26,28).

### **Hebrews 10:19-39**

Given the superiority of the new covenant and Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, believers are urged to "hold fast the confession" and not "shrink back" (verses 23, 37-39).

### **Hebrews 11:1-19**

Faith, as confidence of things not yet seen, confirmed, or received, is illustrated in the lives of Old Testament believers.

### **Hebrews 11:20-40**

Faith, as the assurance of things promised, continues to be illustrated in the lives of Old Testament believers from Isaac through the prophets.

### **Hebrews 12:1-17**

Believers are exhorted to run the race with endurance, regarding suffering as the loving discipline of their heavenly Father.

### **Hebrews 12:18-28**

The old covenant, represented by Mt. Sinai, is unfavorably compared with the new covenant, represented by Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem.

### **Hebrews 13**

Final exhortations, benediction, and greetings.



## **James**

### **Author**

The author identifies himself as “James” (1:1), most likely the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church who presided at the counsel of Jerusalem (Acts 15). He is identified in Galatians as “the Lord’s brother” and a pillar of the church along with Peter and John (Galatians 2:9). James was martyred in 62 A.D.

### **Date & Occasion**

The scholars place the date of James after 44 A.D., the beginning of serious persecution in Judea (Acts 12), and 49 A.D., the date of the Jerusalem counsel (Acts 15). James is possibly the oldest of the New Testament writings.

### **Message**

James deals with a range of subjects often paralleling the Sermon on the Mount. At the heart of his message is his insistence that true faith manifests itself in good works.

#### **James 1:1-15**

Salutation and call to perseverance in life’s trials.

#### **James 1:16-27**

Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

#### **James 2**

Faith without works is dead.

#### **James 3**

Taming the tongue and the nature of godly wisdom.

#### **James 4**

Warnings against worldliness and a call to submit and draw near to God.

#### **James 5**

The rich are warned; patience and prayer are commended.



### Author

The author identifies himself as “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” and “a witness of the sufferings of Christ” (1:1; 5:1). Early confirmation of its authenticity may be found in the writings of the church fathers such as Irenaeus (c. 185 A.D.), Tertullian (c. 160–225 A.D.), and Clement of Alexander (c. 150–215 A.D.), among others.

### Date & Occasion

Peter locates himself in “Babylon,” probably a reference to Rome (5:13; cf. Rev. 17:5,9), which tradition says is where he was at the end of his life. Its date is most likely sometime between 60–68 A.D. If he writes after the Apostle Paul’s release from prison in 62 A.D. and before Nero’s persecutions which began in 64, we may be able to date the letter in 63 A.D. He writes to the “elect exiles of the dispersion,” probably a reference to Christians scattered throughout the Mediterranean to whom Peter is applying a term formerly used to designate Jews living outside of Palestine (1:1). The places named in 1:1 are all regions of Asia Minor that encompass most of present-day Turkey.

### Message

Peter writes to encourage persecuted and distressed Christians. The “apostle of hope,” as Peter has been called, extends hope and provides instruction on handling suffering faithfully.

### 1 Peter 1:1-12

Faith, hope, and joy in Jesus Christ.

### 1 Peter 1:13-25

Our call to holy living and reverential fear.

### 1 Peter 2:1-12

Christ the living stone builds His spiritual house out of living stones.

**1 Peter 2:13-25**

The responsibilities of Christian citizens and servants illustrated by the example of Christ.

**1 Peter 3**

Directions for the Christian home (verses 1-7) and conduct toward unbelievers (verses 13-22).

**1 Peter 4**

Exhortations to moral purity, love, service, and faithfulness.

**1 Peter 5**

Charge to the elders to “Shepherd the flock of God.”

### **Author**

Although the authenticity of Petrine authorship has been challenged in modern times and weakly attested even in ancient times, the epistles claim can be taken at face value: “Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,” is the author (1:1).

### **Date & Occasion**

If 3:1 refers to 1 Peter the date of writing would be sometime between 63–64 A.D. and Peter’s death in 67–78 A.D. As with 1 Peter (1 Peter 5:13), the likely place of writing would be Rome, particularly given the tradition that Peter was martyred there by Nero, and his readers, the same churches in Asia Minor referred to in 1 Peter (1 Peter 1:1).

### **Message**

The Apostle Peter writes to combat false teaching (2:1). He seems to be dealing with an early form of Gnosticism, a heresy that combined elements of Greek philosophy and eastern mysticism, that taught salvation through knowledge, that viewed the body and the physical world as sinful or irrelevant, and so encouraged both asceticism and, ironically, immorality. It is particularly the latter with which the Apostle Paul is dealing. Calvin said, “The majesty of the Spirit of Christ exhibits itself in every part of the epistle.”

### **2 Peter 1**

Salutation and exhortation to confirm one’s calling and election through spiritual growth, the certainty of God’s revelation in Christ.

### **2 Peter 2**

False teachers described and denounced and their destruction assured.

### **2 Peter 3**

The certainty and circumstances of Christ’s return and the ethical implications for us.



## **1 John**

### **Author**

Though the author of the Epistles of John is unidentified, the ancient tradition of the church assigns authorship to the Apostle John. This fits well with the eyewitness and authoritative claims of the opening verses.

### **Date & Occasion**

1 John is likely to have been written after the Gospel of John and before the letter of Ignatius (about 110 A.D.). It was written to combat an incipient Gnosticism that denied the reality of the incarnation. They argued that Jesus only appeared to be human, only *seemed* to partake of human flesh (4:2,3). In addition to theological error there were also behavioral problems: both immorality and lovelessness.

### **Message**

John insists upon a connection between God's attributes of light, truth, and love, and the development of those virtues in the believer. He distinguishes between the genuine believer and the counterfeit, the former being one who walks in the light, believes the truth, the practices love.

### **1 John 1:1–2:6**

The purpose of the epistle (verses 1-4) and the believer's duty to walk in the light, confess sin through our Advocate, and keep the commandments.

### **1 John 2:7-29**

Those who know God love the brethren, love not the world, and confess the truth.

### **1 John 3**

The children of God practice righteousness, love one another, and keep the commandments.

#### **1 John 4**

The children of God confess Jesus Christ and practice love,  
because God is love.

#### **1 John 5**

The children of God believe Jesus is the Christ, love God, keep  
the commandments, and overcome the world.

## **2 John**

### **Author**

The style, content, and tradition assign the authorship of 2 John to the author of the Gospel of John and 1 John, that is, to John the son of Zebedee, the Apostle of Christ.

### **Date & Occasion**

2 John was written to combat the same false teaching addressed in 1 John and was written about the same time, at the end of the first century (between 80 and 100 A.D.).

### **Message**

John urges his readers to both walk in truth and talk in love, and reject those who deny the reality of Christ's incarnation.



## **3 John**

### **Author**

Like 1 and 2 John, the 3<sup>rd</sup> epistle is written by the author of the Gospel of John, John the son of Zebedee, the Apostle of Christ.

### **Date & Occasion**

3 John is occasioned by a conflict between Diotrephes and others in the congregation over the issue of hospitality shown to traveling missionaries. It may be that it was written earlier than either 1 or 2 John, placing it in the 80's of the first century.

### **Message**

John writes to underscore the importance of hospitality, rebuking Diotrephes and commending Demetrius.



### **Author**

The author identifies himself as “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.” The James referred to is likely to be the half-brother of Jesus, author of the epistle that bears his name, an important church leader.

### **Date & Occasion**

Jude is difficult to date and can only be inferred by the age of the author and the heresy he addresses. The most likely date is before 65–67 A.D., the date of 2 Peter

### **Message**

Jude, Like 2 Peter, writes to combat false teachers who were using the grace of God in Christ as a license for sin. He both denounces false teaching and commends the positive application of Christian truth.



## **Revelation**

### **Author**

The writer identifies himself as John, traditionally understood to be John the Apostle.

### **Date & Occasion**

Written during a time of persecution in order to exhort the churches to remain faithful and to give them hope of final victory. The Emperor Nero's reign (A.D. 54-68) or Domitian's (A.D. 81-96) are the two most likely timeframes for composition, most scholars favoring a date around A.D. 95. It is addressed to seven churches located in Asia Minor, in what is today modern western Turkey.

### **Message**

Following the opening vision of Christ upon His throne (1:12-20), He addresses the seven churches (2:1-3:22), and then, employing what is called apocalyptic language, presents a series of visions portraying the church's struggle with evil in history, culminating in the victory and reign of Christ (4:1– 22:5). This main section of The Revelation is cyclical in structure, consisting of seven cycles of judgment, each telling the same story, each culminating in the return of Christ, each told from a fresh vantage point. It concludes with final exhortations and benediction (22:6-21).

### **Revelation 1:1-8**

John's prologue and greeting of the seven churches.

### **Revelation 1:9-20**

John's vision of the Son of Man.

### **Revelation 2:1-17**

Christ's instructions to the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos.

### **Revelation 2:18-27**

Christ's instructions to the church in Thyatira.

### **Revelation 3**

Christ's instructions to the churches in Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

### **Revelation 4**

A vision of the heavenly throne, of Him who sits upon it, and the worship that surrounds it.

### **Revelation 5**

The revelation of the slain Lamb who is worthy to open the scroll/book, break its seven seals, unfolding the plan and purposes of God recorded in chapters 6–22..

### **Revelation 6**

The worthy Lamb opens the first six seals of the scroll/book which describe successive judgments, beginning with the “four horsemen of the Apocalypse,” and ending in the Second Coming.

### **Revelation 7**

Following the opening of the 6 seals of the scroll/book in chapter 6, the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> is delayed as the servants of God are assured of God's protection.

### **Revelation 8**

The seventh seal of the scroll/book is opened, ending the first cycle of judgment (chapters 4–7) and beginning the second (chapters 8–11). This cycle consists of seven trumpets which parallel the seven seals, though the intensity of the judgments increases. Trumpets 1-4 are blown, with accompanying calamities.

### **Revelation 9**

The sounding of trumpets 5 and 6 of 7 and their accompanying calamities upon the earth.

### **Revelation 10**

An interlude between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpets, extending to chapter 11:14, describes the prophetic call of God's people and His protection of them in the midst of His judgments.

### **Revelation 11**

The ministry of the two faithful witnesses is described (11:1-14) and the seventh trumpet sounds, bringing to a conclusion the second cycle of judgment in the Second Coming of Christ (11:15-19).

### **Revelation 12**

The third cycle of visions, following the first cycle of 7 seals (chapters 6-7) and second cycle of seven trumpets (chapters 8-11) begins, and extends to the end of chapter 14. The work of redemption is depicted through the symbols of a woman, a child, a dragon, and Michael.

### **Revelation 13**

Two beasts, depicting persecuting power, particularly of the state, are described, requiring "the endurance and faith of the saints" (v. 10).

### **Revelation 14**

The third cycle of visions which began in chapter 12 is completed with the vision of the 144,000, the messages of the three angels, and the Second Coming depicted as a harvest.

### **Revelation 15**

The fourth cycle of visions, extending to the end of chapter 16, begins with a vision of seven angels, with seven golden bowls of God's wrath, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

### **Revelation 16**

The seven angels pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath introduced in chapter 15, culminating in the Second Coming in verses 16:17-21.

### **Revelation 17**

The fifth cycle of visions begins in verse 1 and extends to chapter 19:20, depicting the judgment of Babylon, a symbol of the immoral and idolatrous world of paganism.

### **Revelation 18**

The fall of Babylon, symbolic of the immoral and idolatrous world of paganism, is announced and celebrated.

### **Revelation 19**

Verses 1-10 complete the fifth cycle of visions with the celebration of the saints over Babylon's destruction. Verse 11 marks the beginning of the sixth cycle of visions which extends to 21:6, and which focus on the final battle between Christ and His enemies, culminating in the Second Coming and final judgment.

### **Revelation 20**

Revelation 20–21:8 continues the sixth cycle of visions, chapter 20 depicting the binding of Satan and the Great White Throne judgment.

### **Revelation 21**

The 6<sup>th</sup> cycle of visions concludes with the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth (verses 1-8). The 7<sup>th</sup> cycle of visions begins in verse 9 depicting the New Jerusalem and extends to 22:5.

### **Revelation 22**

The seventh cycle of visions, that of the New Jerusalem, concludes with a description of a restored Eden (verses 1-5). John's Revelation closes with a promise, an exhortation, and a warning (verses 6-21).

## Lesson Count for Each Book of the Bible

### Old Testament

Genesis	56
Exodus	28
Leviticus	12
Numbers	20
Deuteronomy	33
Joshua	18
Judges	27
Ruth	4
1 Samuel	36
2 Samuel	31
1 Kings	37
2 Kings	36
1 Chronicles	19
2 Chronicles	41
Ezra	9
Nehemiah	11
Esther	10
Job	41
Psalms	164
Proverbs	32
Ecclesiastes	13
Solomon	8
Isaiah	77
Jeremiah	70
Lamentations	6
Ezekiel	47
Daniel	15
Hosea	13
Joel	4
Amos	9
Obadiah	1
Jonah	4
Micah	7
Nahum	3
Habakkuk	3

Zephaniah	3
Haggai	2
Zechariah	14
Malachi	<u>4</u>
OT total	
(excluding Pss.)	968

### New Testament

Matthew	38
Mark	25
Luke	42
John	34
Acts	33
Romans	22
1 Corinthians	20
2 Corinthians	15
Galatians	6
Ephesians	9
Philippians	6
Colossians	5
1 Thessalonians	5
2 Thessalonians	3
1 Timothy	6
2 Timothy	4
Titus	3
Philemon	1
Hebrews	16
James	6
1 Peter	7
2 Peter	3
1 John	5
2 John	1
3 John	1
Jude	1
Revelation	<u>24</u>
NT total	341