

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

LAW OF MOSES

The name **Genesis** literally means “*In the Beginning*”. Tradition credits Moses as the author of the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch), but the books are actually compiled from four separate sources: the Jahwist source (J), the Elohist source (E), the Priestly source (P), and the Deuteronomist source (D). Genesis tells the story of the creation of the world and the beginning of the nation of Israel.

- Chapters 1–5 explain the creation of all things, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (1:1). Adam and Eve eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and are expelled.
- In chapters 6–10, Noah builds an ark to save his family and the animals from the Flood.
- In chapters 11–19, God calls Abraham to settle in Canaan. God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah.
- In chapters 20–24, Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah, “*I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore*” (22:7).
- In chapters 25–36, Isaac’s son, Jacob, flees after cheating his twin brother Esau of his birthright and their father’s blessing. Jacob fathers twelve sons through his wives and their female servants: Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun), Rachel (Joseph and Benjamin), Zilpah (Gad and Asher), Bilhah (Dan and Naphtali). They are the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- In chapters 37–41, Jacob’s favorite son, Joseph, is sold into slavery in Egypt.
- In chapters 42–50, Jacob’s family is reunited with Joseph in Egypt.

The book of **Exodus** records Israel’s deliverance from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

- In chapters 1–4, Moses grows up in Egypt, and God calls him from a burning bush.
- In chapters 5–12, Moses, with his brother Aaron, confronts Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. When Pharaoh refuses, God releases ten plagues on the land of Egypt: blood, frogs, gnats, flies, death of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and death of the firstborn.
- In chapters 13–18, the Israelites leave Egypt, crossing the Red Sea in a miracle, “*and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left*” (14:22).
- In chapters 19–24, Moses gives the Ten Commandments and other laws to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, “*You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image ... You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God ... Remember the Sabbath day ... Honor your father and your mother ... You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony ... You shall not covet ...*” (20:3–17).
- In chapters 25–40, God instructs the Israelites to build the tabernacle and make priestly garments.

The book of **Leviticus** gives procedural instructions for the Israelites, especially the Levitical priests, on how to carry out offerings, ceremonies and celebrations. Scholars attribute the content of chapters 1–16 to the Priestly source (P) and chapters 17–26 to the Holiness source (H).

- Chapters 1–7 describe how to perform offerings to God: burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship offering, sin offering and guilt offering.
- In chapters 8–10, Moses anoints Aaron and his sons as priests.
- In chapters 11–15, Moses teaches the procedures for clean and unclean food, purification after childbirth, skin diseases, molds and bodily discharge.
- Chapter 16 describes the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies.
- Chapters 17–27 give the “Holiness Code” — laws that apply generally for living a holy life. There are laws regarding blood, sexual immorality, punishments for sin, priests, sacrifices, religious festivals, the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee, “*... ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy*” (19:1).

The book of **Numbers** records the Israelites’ journey in the wilderness from Sinai to Canaan. In the book, Moses takes two population censuses, hence the name “Numbers”.

- In chapters 1–4, Moses takes a census, mainly to see how many fighting men there are.
- In chapters 5–10, Moses decrees various ordinances and laws to the Israelites.
- In chapters 11–12, God sends quails to the Israelites. Aaron and Miriam speak against Moses.
- In chapters 13–15, after hearing reports from the spies, the Israelites are afraid to enter Canaan. They wander in the wilderness for forty years, “*Your children will be shepherds here for forty years,*

suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness” (14:33).

- In chapter 16, Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebel against Moses and are swallowed up by the earth.
- In chapters 17–19, God instructs Aaron of priestly duties.
- In chapters 20–21, the Israelites complain of lack of water. Edom and Sihon deny Israel passage.
- In chapters 22–24, Balak, king of Moab, sends his prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites.
- In chapters 25–30, Moses conducts a second census, and gives instructions for various offerings.
- In chapters 31–36, Moses recounts the journey from Egypt and assigns leaders to divide the land.

The book of **Deuteronomy** was composed in the 7th century BCE, being possibly the Book of the Law that was “discovered” in the temple during King Josiah’s reign. The name means “*Second Law*”, a Greek mistranslation of the Hebrew phrase “a copy of this law”.

- In chapters 1–4, Moses reminds the Israelites of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness.
- In chapters 5–11, Moses restates the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, “*Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors*” (8:1).
- Chapters 12–16 give the laws for worship, clean and unclean food, Sabbath year and festivals.
- Chapters 17–20 give the rules for law courts, kings, priests and prophets, and how to go to war.
- Chapters 21–26 give the laws for marriage, sons, family life, disputes and tithes.
- In chapters 27–30, the Israelites renew their covenant with God as a nation.
- In chapters 31–34, Moses hands over his authority to Joshua. In the last chapter, Moses climbs Mount Nebo to see the Promised Land, although he cannot enter it. He dies at the age of 120.

HISTORICAL BOOKS

The book of **Joshua** describes the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Traditionally taken to be written by Joshua (13th century BCE), the stories were compiled during the reign of King Josiah (7th century BCE). Excavations showed that Jericho and Ai were destroyed centuries earlier.

- In chapters 1–2, Joshua sends spies to spy on Canaan. They receive help from Rahab the prostitute.
- In chapters 3–4, Joshua and the Israelites cross the Jordan River by walking on dry land.
- In chapters 5–6, the Israelites conquer the city of Jericho, “*When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city*” (6:20).
- In chapters 7–8, Achan keeps some of the loot, and so the Israelites fail at first to capture Ai.
- In chapter 9, the Gibeonites deceive Israel into letting them live.
- In chapters 10–12, the Israelites conquer southern and northern Canaan.
- In chapters 13–22, the land is divided up and distributed among the tribes of Israel.
- In chapters 23–24, Joshua bids farewell to Israel, “*But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord*” (24:15). He dies at the age of 110.

The book of **Judges** contains the history of judges — divinely inspired leaders who, from time to time, save the Israelites from foreign oppressors. Contrary to claims of sweeping conquest of Canaan by Joshua, the book of Judges is historically more correct and shows the Israelites living on the outskirts of existing Canaanite towns in a slow process of colonization rather than a short war of total conquest.

- In chapters 1–2, the Israelites fail to drive out all the Canaanites from Canaan.
- In chapter 3, Othniel saves Israel from the King of Aram, and then Ehud saves Israel from Moab.
- In chapters 4–5, Deborah saves Israel from Jabin, king of Canaan and Sisera, his captain.
- In chapters 6–8, Gideon saves Israel from the Midianites.
- In chapter 9, Abimelek, son of Gideon, kills his seventy brothers and rules Israel for three years.
- In chapters 10–12, Tola and then Jair lead Israel, and Jephthah rescues Israel from the Ammonites. He is followed by Ibzan, Elon and then Abdon.
- In chapters 13–16, Samson rescues Israel from the Philistines.
- In chapters 17–21, the Israelites are in a worse condition than they were at the beginning, “*In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit*” (21:25). The tribe of Dan conquers a city in

Ephraim instead of Canaanite cities, and the tribe of Benjamin fights against the other tribes of Israel.

The book of **Ruth** tells a story that takes place during the period of the Judges. In the rest of the bible, Moab is associated with hostility to Israel, sexual perversity and idolatry, and Deuteronomy 23:3 specifies that *“No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even in the tenth generation”*. Despite this, Ruth the Moabitess marries a Jew and bears a son who becomes the grandfather of David. The message in this book is contrary to that of Ezra, who insisted that marriages between Jewish men and non-Jewish women are to be broken up.

- In chapter 1, Naomi decides to return to her homeland of Bethlehem after the death of her husband and sons. Her daughter-in-law Ruth insists on going with her, *“But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”* (1:16).
- In chapter 2, Ruth gleans in the fields of Naomi’s relative Boaz.
- In chapter 3, Naomi encourages Ruth to seek marriage with Boaz as a guardian-redeemer.
- In chapter 4, Ruth marries Boaz, and gives birth to Obed, the grandfather of David.

The book of **1st Samuel** records the history of the prophet Samuel and King Saul. Traditionally the book was attributed to Samuel, but the common view today is that the bulk of it was written during the reign of King Josiah (7th century BCE), with further sections added during the Babylonian exile.

- In chapters 1–3, Samuel is born to Hannah, and is brought to the tabernacle to serve God.
- In chapters 4–7, the Philistines capture and later return the Ark of the Covenant to the Israelites.
- In chapters 8–15, the Israelites select Saul as their king. Due to continuous disobedience to God’s will, Samuel informs Saul that God has rejected him as the rightful king, *“... Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king”* (15:23).
- In chapters 16–17, God selects David as his king. David kills Goliath, a Philistine giant, with a single stone, *“Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.”* (17:49).
- In chapters 18–26, David escapes from Saul who tries to kill him.
- In chapters 27–31, the Philistines defeat Israel in battle, and Saul tragically takes his own life.

The book of **2nd Samuel** records the history of David as the King of Israel. Approximately half of the book tells of King David’s success and the other half shows his failures.

- In chapters 1–4, David becomes the king of Judah while Saul’s son Ish-Bosheth becomes king of the northern part (Israel). Ish-Bosheth is murdered and David rules the entire nation of Israel.
- In chapters 5–7, David builds his capital at Jerusalem and brings the ark of God there, *“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”* (7:16).
- In chapters 8–10, David defeats all the nations around Israel.
- In chapters 11–12, David commits adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
- In chapter 13, David’s son Absalom kills his half-brother Amnon for raping his sister Tamar.
- In chapters 14–19, Absalom conspires to usurp David’s throne but is killed by Joab.
- In chapters 20–21, David puts down a revolt by Sheba, a Benjamite, and avenges the Gibeonites.
- Chapters 22–24 give David’s last words and a list of his warriors.

The book of **1st Kings** describes the rule of Solomon and the split of the kingdom after his death.

- In chapters 1–4, Solomon becomes the king after his father David dies. Solomon asks God for wisdom and God is pleased at this request, *“Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt”* (4:30).
- In chapters 5–9, Solomon builds the temple of the Lord and the royal palace.
- In chapter 10, the Queen of Sheba visits Solomon.
- In chapter 11, Solomon is led astray, *“As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been”* (11:4). He dies after a reign of forty years.
- In chapters 12–14, Rehoboam succeeds Solomon as king. The northern ten tribes revolt to form the Northern Kingdom of Israel, while Judah and Benjamin remain as the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- In chapters 15–16, Abijah and Asa reign successively as kings of Judah, while Nadab, Baasha, Elah,

Zimri and Omri reign successively as kings of Israel.

- In chapters 17–19, Elijah challenges and kills all the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel.
- In chapters 20–22, King Ahab of Israel takes Naboth's vineyard, and dies in battle.

The book of **2nd Kings** records the history of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It concludes the Deuteronomistic history, a series of books running from Deuteronomy through Joshua, Judges and Samuel, which was written to explain that the exile was God's punishment for Israel's unfaithfulness.

- In chapter 1, King Ahaziah of Israel dies when Moab rebels.
- In chapter 2, God takes the prophet Elijah up to heaven, "*As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind*" (2:11). Elisha takes over from Elijah.
- In chapters 3–7, Elisha performs miracles: the widow's olive oil, resurrecting the Shunammite's son, feeding the hundred, healing Naaman of leprosy, floating the iron axhead, blinding the Arameans.
- In chapter 8, Jehoram reigns as king of Judah, followed by Ahaziah.
- In chapters 9–10, Elisha anoints Jehu as king of Israel to destroy the house of Ahab.
- In chapters 11–16, Queen Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah (Azariah), Jotham and Ahaz reign successively as kings of Judah, while Jehoahaz, Jehoshaphat, Jeroboam, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah and Pekah reign successively as kings of Israel.
- In chapter 17, the Assyrians take the Northern Kingdom into captivity. The ten northern tribes of Israel are forever "lost" to history, either wiped out or assimilated into other people groups.
- In chapters 18–20, King Hezekiah of Judah "*trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel*" (18:5).
- In chapters 21–25, King Josiah carries out reforms, while all the other kings of Judah "*did evil in the eyes of the Lord*". The Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and carry its people into exile.

The book of **1st Chronicles** gives the genealogy of humanity starting from Adam, but the bulk of the book is about the reign of David. This book parallels some of 2nd Samuel, and therefore describes similar events. The book was written in the 4th century BCE largely by a single individual, traditionally taken to be Ezra, with some later additions and editing. Its purpose is to remind the Jews who returned from exile of the special position of Israel among all nations.

- Chapters 1–9 start with the beginning of the history of humanity, with Adam, and the story is then carried forward, almost entirely by genealogical lists, down to the founding of the Israelite monarchy.
- Chapters 10–22 describe the reign and conquests of David, "*And David became more and more powerful, because the Lord Almighty was with him*" (11:9).
- Chapters 23–29 list the officials of Israel, as David prepares to hand over his kingdom to Solomon.

The book of **2nd Chronicles** records the events from King Solomon's reign in 970 BCE up to the Babylonian captivity in 587 BCE. It was written to show that kings are rewarded or punished according to whether they obey or disobey God. It covers much the same time-period as 1st and 2nd Kings, but ignores the northern Kingdom of Israel almost completely.

- Chapters 1–9 describe the reign of King Solomon, especially the building of the temple in Jerusalem, "*I have built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever*" (6:2).
- In chapters 10–12, the northern ten tribes revolt to form the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam, while Rehoboam remains the king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- In chapters 13–16, Abijah reigns as king of Judah, followed by Asa.
- In chapters 17–20, Jehoshaphat builds forts and strengthens Judah.
- In chapters 21–28, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz reign successively as kings of Judah. Most of them "*did evil in the eyes of the Lord*".
- In chapters 29–32, Hezekiah restores worship at the temple. Sennacherib lays siege on Jerusalem.
- In chapter 33, Manasseh reigns for fifty-five years as king of Judah, the longest in Judah's history, followed by Amon. They both "*did evil in the eyes of the Lord*".
- In chapters 34–35, Josiah carries out religious reforms. He was shot during a battle.
- In chapter 36, the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and take its people into exile. In the final verses, the Persian king Cyrus conquers Babylon, and authorizes the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

The book of **Ezra** records the Jews' return from exile in 538 BCE to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

- In chapters 1–3, the Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple under Zerubbabel and Joshua.
- In chapters 4–6, the surrounding enemies begin opposing the project. With encouragement from the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the temple is finally completed in 515 BCE, “*So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia.*” (6:14).
- In chapters 7–10, Ezra returns to Jerusalem and is appalled that some of the Jews have married foreign wives. The Jews repent and send away their foreign wives and their children. Scholars are not sure whether Ezra returned during the reign of Artaxerxes I or II, and so Ezra could have returned before or after Nehemiah had rebuilt Jerusalem’s wall.

The book of **Nehemiah** shows how Nehemiah leads the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem’s wall in 445 BCE.

- In chapters 1–7, Nehemiah leads the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem’s wall, “*...Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace*” (2:17). The wall is completed in 52 days.
- In chapters 8–13, Ezra reads from the Book of the Law of Moses. The people and priests enter into a covenant, agreeing to separate themselves from the surrounding people and keep the Law.

The book of **Esther**, according to some sources, is a historical novella, written to explain the origin of the Jewish holiday of Purim. Along with the Song of Solomon, Esther is one of only two books in the Bible that do not explicitly mention God. It is a post-exilic book about Jews who stayed behind in Babylon instead of returning to Jerusalem after the exile. It tells the story of Esther who becomes the Queen of Persia and saves her people from genocide.

- In chapters 1–2, Esther becomes the queen to Ahasuerus of Persia (traditionally taken as Xerxes).
- In chapters 3–5, Mordecai (Esther’s cousin and guardian) refuses to bow down to Haman, who then plots to kill all the Jews in the kingdom. When Mordecai finds out about this, he implores Esther to try and intercede with the King, “*For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?*” (4:14).
- In chapters 6–7, Mordecai is honored by the king, and Haman is impaled on the pole he set up.
- In chapters 8–10, the Jews kill all the armed men who attack them.

POETRY

The book of **Job** was written by an unknown Israelite, based on a traditional account about a righteous man who endured great suffering — Job from “*the land of Uz*” (usually associated with Edom). The book consists of a prologue and epilogue in prose (chapters 1, 2 and 42), and three cycles of dialogue in poetry. The wisdom poem of chapter 28 and Elihu’s speech (chapters 32–37) are late insertions. The book attempts to answer the question “Why do the righteous suffer?”

- In chapters 1–3, God tests Job’s faithfulness by allowing Satan to take Job’s wealth, kill all his children and servants, and afflict his body with boils. Though Job loses everything, he remains faithful, “*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing*” (1:22).
- Chapters 4–14 give the first cycle of dialogues by Job’s friends Eliphaz, Bilbad and Zophar, each being followed by Job’s reply. They mistakenly believe that Job’s suffering is a punishment for his sin.
- Chapters 15–21 give the second cycle of dialogues by Eliphaz, Bilbad and Zophar.
- Chapters 22–27 give the third cycle of dialogues by Eliphaz and Bilbad.
- Chapter 28 is a poem to Wisdom, “*But where can wisdom be found? ...*” (28:12).
- Chapters 29–37 give Job’s closing reply and Elihu’s speech.
- In chapters 38–41, God asks Job a series of questions that cannot be answered by mortals, “*Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt?*” (38:31).
- In chapter 42, God blesses Job “*... and gave him twice as much as he had before*” (42:10).

The **Psalms** is a book of Songs and Poetry. 73 of the 150 psalms have been attributed to David, but there is no evidence for his authorship. The composition of the psalms spans at least five centuries, from Psalm 29, probably adapted from a Canaanite hymn to Baal, to others which are clearly post-Exilic. The collection is traditionally divided into five books: 1–41, 42–72, 73–89, 90–106, 107–150,

each ending with a doxology. The contents range from praise, thanksgiving, confession of sin, lament to cry for deliverance. Some psalms are among the best-loved passages of Scripture:

- Psalm 1 “*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked*” sets the tone for all psalms;
- Psalm 8 “*what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?*” marvels at the limitless grandeur of God, and the smallness of human beings;
- Psalm 22 “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” occurs on the lips of the crucified Jesus;
- Psalm 23 “*The Lord is My Shepherd*” offers comfort and assurance to the soul in the face of death;
- Psalm 51 “*Have mercy on me O God*” is one of the most frequently used penitential psalms;
- Psalm 103 “*Praise the Lord, O my soul*” may be the “Mt. Everest” of praise psalms, using a range of imagery, “*as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us*”;
- Psalm 121 “*I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from?*” reminds us that the Lord is watching over us so that “*the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night*”;
- Psalm 137 “*By the rivers of Babylon*”, about life in exile, has been made into a reggae song;
- Psalm 139 “*Search me, God, and know my heart*” is a personal reflection of God’s omnipresence;
- Psalm 150 “*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord*” is a final doxology to the psalms.

The book of **Proverbs** has been attributed to Solomon on account of his legendary wisdom (1 Kings 4:29–34). The book is made up of eight collections of wise sayings, collected over time, and reaching its final form around the 5th century BCE. It deals with life, principles, good judgment and perception. In contrast to the rest of the bible, which appeal to divine revelation, this book appeals to human reason.

- Chapters 1–9: “The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel” are speeches inviting the son to seek wisdom, “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction*” (1:7).
- Chapters 10–22:16: “Proverbs of Solomon” contrast the wise and the foolish (or the righteous and the wicked), “*A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother*” (10:1).
- Chapters 22:17–24: “Thirty Sayings of the Wise”, which come mainly from a second-millennium Egyptian work, the Instruction of Amenemope, followed by “Further Sayings of the Wise”.
- Chapters 25–29: “More proverbs of Solomon, compiled by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah”, indicating that this list was collated during the reign of Hezekiah in the late 8th century BCE.
- Chapter 30: “Sayings of Agur”, “*Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread*” (30:8).
- Chapter 31: “Sayings of King Lemuel” and “The Ideal Wise Woman”, “*A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies*” (31:10).

The book of **Ecclesiastes** seems contrary to the rest of the Bible, teaching that all is meaningless and futile. The author introduces himself as “son of David, king in Jerusalem” (i.e., Solomon), but the presence of Persian loan-words and Aramaisms points to a time long after Solomon, no earlier than about 450 BCE. It was written to warn the reader against seeking meaningless, materialistic emptiness.

- Chapters 1–2 say that there is no meaning in everything, “*Meaningless! Meaningless!*” says the Teacher. “*Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.*” (1:2).
- Chapter 3 says that “*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot*” (3:1–2).
- Chapters 4–6 say that accomplishment and riches are ultimately useless, “*Everyone comes naked from their mother’s womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands.*” (5:15).
- Chapters 7–8 say that even the wise men do not comprehend, “*So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad...*” (8:15).
- Chapters 9–12 give the conclusion, “*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind*” (12:13).

The **Song of Solomon** is a love poem, traditionally attributed to Solomon. The presence of Aramaic words indicates that it was completed centuries after Solomon’s day. The book is unique in the bible for its celebration of sexual love. It describes two young lovers yearning for each other, and proffering invitations to enjoy sexual intimacy. The description does not quite fit an oriental despot who had “*seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines*” (1 Kings 11:3).

- In chapters 1–2, the woman (Shulammitte girl) expresses her deep desire to be with her lover, “*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth — for your love is more delightful than wine*” (1:2).
- Chapter 3 describes a royal wedding procession, “*Look! It is Solomon’s carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel*” (3:7).
- Chapters 4–7 describe the woman’s beauty, “*I said, ‘I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit.’ May your breasts be like clusters of grapes on the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine.*” (7:8–9).
- Chapter 8 concludes with the power of true love, “*... for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.*” (8:6).

MAJOR PROPHETS

The book of **Isaiah** is seen by scholars to compose of three separate collections of oracles: chapters 1–39 written by the prophet Isaiah in the 8th-century BCE; chapters 40–55 written by an anonymous 6th-century author during the Exile; and chapters 56–66 composed after the return from exile. Isaiah is the first book in the section called Major Prophets, so called because the books they wrote are longer, and not because they are more important than other prophets. The purpose of the book was to announce God’s judgment on Judah, and about the Servant of the Lord.

- In chapters 1–6, Isaiah proclaims the coming Day of the Lord, “*...They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks ...*” (2:4).
- In chapters 7–12, Isaiah proclaims what God will bring on Judah, “*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.*” (7:14–16).
- In chapters 13–23, Isaiah declares severe punishment to all the neighboring nations — Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush (Ethiopia), Egypt, Dumah (Edom), Arabia and Tyre.
- Chapters 24–27 form Isaiah’s “Little Apocalypse” where the whole earth is destroyed.
- Chapters 28–33 warn Judah that it is useless to rely on Egypt to fight against the Assyrians.
- In chapters 34–35, Isaiah prophesies the doom of Edom and the redemption of Judah.
- In chapters 36–39, Sennacherib king of Assyria tries to conquer Judah but fails.
- In chapters 40–41, the scenario changes suddenly from the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians to comforting the exiles in Babylon, “*but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*” (40:31).
- Chapters 42–44 say that God will save Israel, his servant, “*Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you.*” (44:21).
- Chapters 45–48 announce that the exiles will return, “*I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free.*” (45:13).
- Chapters 49–55 describe the Servant of the Lord, “*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed*” (53:5). This can be interpreted as the nation of Israel or the future Messiah.
- Chapters 56–66 comfort those who have returned from exile, “*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me ... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor...*” (61:1–2). This is the verse that Jesus preached at the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18).

The book of **Jeremiah** was written by the “weeping” prophet Jeremiah during his ministry in about 626–587 BCE. Its purpose was to warn Israel of the impending destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible by word count (even though Isaiah and Psalms have more chapters). The book has no real order to it; it jumps back and forth in time.

- In chapters 1–6, Jeremiah condemns Judah for their sins, “*And when the people ask, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all this to us?’ you will tell them, ‘As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own’*” (5:19).
- In chapters 7–10, Jeremiah, starting with his Temple Sermon in chapter 7, weeps over the people’s delusion that the temple at Jerusalem will save them, “*Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.*” (9:1).

- In chapters 11–20, Jeremiah uses a linen belt, potter’s clay and smashing a clay jar to illustrate the judgment on Israel, “... *Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel*” (18:6).
- In chapters 21–23, Jeremiah indicts Israel’s kings and false prophets for misleading Israel.
- In chapter 24, Jeremiah uses two baskets of figs to compare the exile and staying in Jerusalem.
- In chapter 25, Jeremiah predicts that the length of the captivity will be 70 years.
- In chapters 26–29, Jeremiah urges the exiles to submit to Babylonian rule.
- Chapters 30–33 declare that God will restore Israel, “*The days are coming,*” declares the Lord, “*when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah*” (31:31).
- In chapters 34–36, Jeremiah announces judgment on King Zedekiah and commends the Rekabites for obeying the command not to drink wine. King Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah’s scroll.
- Chapters 37–45 are the ‘Baruch Narrative’, probably written by Jeremiah’s secretary Baruch, and chronicle the events before and after the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is thrown into a cistern, Jerusalem is destroyed, King Zedekiah is blinded, the people are exiled and Jeremiah taken to Egypt.
- Chapters 46–51 announce punishment to the nations surrounding Israel: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar and Hazor, Elam, and Babylon.
- Chapter 52 summarizes the destruction of Jerusalem, as retold in 2 Kings 24–25.

The book of **Lamentations** consists of five poems. The first four are written as acrostics – chapters 1, 2, and 4 each have 22 verses, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the first lines beginning with the first letter of the alphabet, the second with the second letter, and so on. Chapter 3 has 66 verses, in which each three successive verses begin with the same letter. The book laments the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 587 BCE. The book has traditionally been ascribed to Jeremiah, but the language used fits an Exilic date (587–520 BCE). In his grief over the destruction of Jerusalem, it is unlikely that Jeremiah will take time to construct acrostics. The poems were probably written by Judeans who remained in Judea during the Exile.

- In chapter 1, Jerusalem sits like a desolate weeping widow overcome with miseries, “*How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.*” (1:1).
- Chapter 2 describes the miseries in connection with national sins and acts of God.
- Chapter 3 speaks of hope for the people of God: the chastisement is for their good.
- Chapter 4 laments the ruin and desolation of the city and temple.
- Chapter 5 is a prayer that Zion’s reproach be taken away.

The book of **Ezekiel** was written by Ezekiel, a priest living in exile in Babylon between 597 and 571 BCE, with some later addition. The book is divided into three parts: chapters 1–24 (judgment on Israel); chapters 25–32 (judgment on nearby nations); chapters 33–48 (restoration of Israel).

- In chapters 1–3, Ezekiel sees a vision of four creatures with four faces, and is called to be a prophet.
- In chapters 4–7, Ezekiel portrays the siege of Jerusalem in four symbolical acts — laying siege to a block of clay, lying on his side, cooking using human excrement, and cutting his hair with a sword.
- In chapters 8–11, Ezekiel describes idolatry in Jerusalem and the resultant judgment.
- Chapters 12–24 condemn the false prophets and warns of the complete destruction of Jerusalem.
- In chapters 25–32, Ezekiel proclaims judgment upon seven nations who mock Israel — Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt.
- Chapter 33 announces Jerusalem’s fall, “*In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has fallen!”*” (33:21).
- In chapter 34, God declares that he will be Israel’s Shepherd.
- In chapters 35–36, Ezekiel prophesies that Edom will be made desolate, but Israel will be restored.
- In chapter 37, Ezekiel sees a vision of a valley of dry bones, “... *And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone*” (37:7).
- In chapters 38–39, Ezekiel prophesies against Gog, of the land of Magog.
- In chapters 40–48, Ezekiel describes in great detail the future Millennial Temple.

The book of **Daniel** was written during the persecution of the Jews by the Greek tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167–164 BCE. Daniel is a legendary figure known for his wisdom. Chapters 1–6 record Daniel’s life as an exile in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar in the 6th Century BCE, and Chapters

7–12 outline history in a series of apocalyptic visions. Just as God saved Daniel and his friends from their Babylonian enemies, so surely he would save present day Israel from Antiochus Epiphanes.

- In chapter 1, Daniel refuses royal food and wine, but is healthier than the other young men.
- In chapters 2–4, Daniel interprets King Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams. Daniel’s three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to bow to the king’s image of gold, and are thrown into a fiery furnace.
- In chapter 5, Daniel interprets the writing that King Belshazzar sees on the wall. Belshazzar is killed and Darius the Mede takes over the kingdom. There is no Darius the Mede in history.
- In chapter 6, Daniel prays to his God when it is forbidden, and is thrown into a lions’ den, “*My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions...*” (6:22).
- In chapters 7–8, Daniel sees a vision of the four beasts, and a ram and a goat.
- In chapter 9, God tells Daniel that “*Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed*” for Israel to put an end to sin.
- In chapters 10–11, Daniel sees a vision of a man in linen, and the kings of the North and South.
- In chapter 12, God tells Daniel that the End Times will come “*for a time, times and half a time*”.

MINOR PROPHETS

The book of **Hosea** is the first book in the section of Minor Prophets, so called because the books they wrote are shorter. Hosea wrote his book in the 8th century BCE. Hosea’s marriage is symbolic of the covenant between God and Israel; Israel has been unfaithful to God by following other gods.

- In chapters 1–3, God instructs Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman, Gomer, who later leaves him for another man. Hosea goes to find her and redeems her, “*The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”*” (3:1).
- In chapters 4–10, Hosea proclaims God’s charges and punishment against Israel, “*...because they have deserted the Lord to give themselves to prostitution ...*” (4:10).
- In chapters 11–14, Hosea describes God’s love and anger towards Israel, “*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son*” (11:1).

In the book of **Joel**, the prophet Joel describes locusts that cause great damage to everything in their paths. His purpose is to call Israel to repent or prepare for the coming judgment. The date of the book is unknown as there are no explicit references to datable persons or events.

- In chapter 1, Joel laments over a great locust plague and a severe drought, “*What the locust swarm has left, the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left, the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left, other locusts have eaten*” (1:4).
- In chapter 2, God calls his people to return to him, “*And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.*” (2:28). This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
- In chapter 3, Joel foretells the Day of the Lord, “*Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side*” (3:12).

The book of **Amos** was written, at a time when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was prosperous, to announce God’s judgment for their greed, idolatry and oppression of the poor. Amos, a shepherd from Judah and an older contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah, prophesied around 750 BCE, making this book the first prophetic book in the Old Testament.

- In chapters 1–4, Amos announces judgment on the neighboring nations — Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab and Judah, followed by judgment on Israel, “*... For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.*” (2:6).
- In chapters 5–6, Amos proclaims that God prefers justice to temple rituals, “*Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream*” (5:23–24).
- In chapters 7–8, Amos sees visions of judgment like locusts, fire, a plumb line and a basket of fruit.
- Chapter 9 says that Israel will be destroyed. Verse 11 onwards was probably added during the Exile.

The book of **Obadiah** announces God’s judgment on the nation of Edom. This book is the shortest book in the Old Testament. The Edomites are the descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother.

- Verses 1–9 declare the wickedness of the Edomites, and give examples of their pride, “*Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down*” (vs. 4).
- Verses 10–14 imply that Edom should have acted like a brother to help defend Israel, since they descended from the brothers, Jacob and Esau. “*You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction*” (vs. 12).
- Verses 15–21 prophesy that Israel will be delivered but not Esau, “*Esau will be stubble, and they will set him on fire and destroy him. There will be no survivors from Esau.*” (vs. 18). Edom was utterly nonexistent by the 1st century CE.

The book of **Jonah** has become well-known as a popular children’s story. It was probably written in the post-exilic period, between the late 5th to early 4th century BCE. It tells the story of a prophet named Jonah whom God sends to prophesy the destruction of Nineveh. There was a real prophet Jonah, mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25, who lived during the reign of Jeroboam II (786–746 BCE).

- In chapter 1, God directs Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah boards a ship to go to Tarshish. A storm brews and Jonah is thrown into the sea where a fish swallows him, “*Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights*” (1:17).
- In chapters 2–3, the fish coughs Jonah out, who then goes to Nineveh to preach his message. To his surprise, the entire population of Nineveh repents, “*The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth*” (3:5).
- In chapter 4, God teaches Jonah about his compassion for a foreign nation, which contrasts with earlier views that Israel’s enemies must be annihilated. This book ends with a question, “*And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left — and also many animals?*” (4:11).

The book of **Micah** can be divided into three parts, each containing oracles of judgment followed by promises of restoration. Only chapters 1–3 were written by the 8th century prophet Micah, while the later chapters were written after the Exile. Micah’s message is similar to that of Isaiah, proclaiming warning and judgment on Israel, followed by hope and comfort.

- Chapters 1–2 proclaim God’s judgment against Samaria and Jerusalem, followed by deliverance. Micah likes to use puns, e.g., Beth Ophrah (“house of dust”) will “*roll in the dust*” (1:10), Zaanand (“come out”) “*will not come out*” (1:11), “*bring a conqueror against*” Mareshah (“conqueror”) (1:15).
- Chapters 3–5 rebuke the leaders and prophets, followed by the restoration of Zion. Micah prophesies that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, “*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times*” (5:2).
- Chapters 6–7 warn that Israel will be punished for lack of justice and honesty, but will be rebuilt and her power will be greater than ever, “*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*” (6:8).

The book of **Nahum** is attributed to the prophet Nahum, and was probably written just before Nineveh fell to the Babylonians in 612 BCE. He preached God’s judgment for a second time to Nineveh, just like what Jonah did about 120 years earlier. Nineveh returned to wickedness shortly after repenting back in Jonah’s day. Within fifty years, Nineveh would be completely destroyed.

- Chapter 1 shows the majesty and might of God, “*Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.*” (1:6).
- In chapters 2–3, Nahum predicts the annihilation of Nineveh, “*All who see you will flee from you and say, ‘Nineveh is in ruins — who will mourn for her?’ Where can I find anyone to comfort you?’*” (3:7). Nineveh was damaged so severely that it was lost in time. It wouldn’t be until the 19th century that the remains of Nineveh could be identified.

The book of **Habakkuk** was written by the prophet Habakkuk in the 7th century BCE, not long before the Babylonians’ siege and capture of Jerusalem. The book is mainly a dialogue between God and Habakkuk about God’s punishment on Israel.

- In Chapter 1, Habakkuk asks why God does not take action against injustice, “*I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings*

not their own" (1:6).

- In Chapter 2, God answers Habakkuk, "*See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright — but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness*" (2:4). The last part forms the basis of Paul's statement on the significance of faith in Christianity (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11).
- Chapter 3 is Habakkuk's prayer expressing his awe and faith in God.

The book of **Zephaniah** is attributed to the prophet Zephaniah, probably a great-great grandson of King Hezekiah, writing during the reign of King Josiah prior to his religious reforms in 622 BCE. The book describes the Day of the Lord, where God will destroy everything from the face of the earth.

- Chapter 1 is a prophesy of the great Day of the Lord, "*I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth,*" "*When I destroy all mankind on the face of the earth,*" *declares the Lord.*" (1:2).
- Chapter 2 foretells the judgment on the nations around Israel: Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Cush and Assyria, "*surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah — a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever*" (2:9).
- Chapter 3 foretells the restoration of Israel's remnant, "*The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm*" (3:15).

The book of **Haggai** was written by the prophet Haggai in approximately 520 BCE, calling the people to quickly finish rebuilding the temple. It is among the most precisely dated books in the Bible.

- In chapter 1, Haggai proclaims God's command to rebuild the temple, "*So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God*" (1:14).
- In chapter 2, Haggai declares that Zerubbabel is God's chosen leader, "*'On that day,' declares the Lord Almighty, 'I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,' declares the Lord, 'and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,' declares the Lord Almighty.*" (2:23).

The book of **Zechariah** was written after the return from exile in Babylon. The book is divided into two parts: chapters 1–8 (written by the prophet Zechariah in the sixth century BCE), concerned mainly with the rebuilding of the temple, and chapters 9–14 (written possibly by one of his disciples in the fifth century BCE), dealing with future events, notably the coming of the Messiah.

- In chapters 1–8, Zechariah uses eight visions to comfort the returned exiles: a man among the myrtle trees, four horns, measuring line, Joshua in filthy clothes, gold lampstand, flying scroll, a woman in a basket, four chariots, "*So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty*" (4:6), "*Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.'*" (6:12). The "Branch" may refer to Zerubbabel, or a Messiah.
- Chapters 9–14 prophesy about the Messiah and the Day of The Lord, "*Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*" (9:9), "*And the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord.*" (11:13).

The book of **Malachi** was written after the return from exile in Babylon. Although "Malachi" is usually taken to be a name, its Hebrew meaning is simply "My messenger". Some scholars note similarities between Zechariah 9–14 and the book of Malachi, which may therefore be the work of a single author. The purpose of this book is to correct the lax religious behavior in post-exilic Jerusalem.

- In chapters 1–2, Malachi identifies the sins of the Jews, including their priests, "*'When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?'*" *says the Lord Almighty.*" (1:8)
- Chapters 3–4 prophesy about the coming Day of the Lord, "*See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes*" (4:5). This refers to John the Baptist.

GOSPELS

The Gospel of **Matthew** was written around 80–90 CE. The author is anonymous: the superscription “according to Matthew” was added some time in the second century. An apostle would have given an eyewitness account, but instead the author copied from the Gospel of Mark (600 verses out of Mark’s 661 verses). He added the sayings of Jesus from a collection known as the Q Source, and quoted many Old Testament prophecies which are fulfilled by Jesus. The key word in Matthew is “Kingdom” (55 times in the NIV). This gospel was written to convince the Jews that Jesus Christ was indeed their long-awaited Messiah. It consists of five blocks of narrative alternating with five blocks of teaching, separated by the phrase “When Jesus had finished...” (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, and 26:1).

- Chapters 1–2 give the genealogy of Jesus, and tell of the virgin birth of Jesus, the visit of the magi and the escape to Egypt, “*She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins*” (1:21).
- In chapters 3–4, Jesus is baptized by John and starts his early ministry in Galilee.
- In chapters 5–7, Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount, including the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (5:3).
- In chapters 8–10, Jesus heals many people and sends out his twelve disciples.
- In chapters 11–13, Jesus tells a few parables, such as the Parable of the Sower.
- In chapters 14–18, Jesus feeds the multitudes and foretells his death and resurrection.
- In chapters 19–25, Jesus goes to Jerusalem and faces hostility from the chief priests and Pharisees.
- In chapters 26–28, Jesus is arrested, trialed before Pontius Pilate and crucified. On the third day, Jesus rises and gives his disciples the Great Commission, “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (28:19).

The Gospel of **Mark** is the earliest and shortest of the synoptic gospels. It was traditionally thought to have been written by John Mark, a companion of Peter, around 66–70 CE. The purpose of this gospel is to show Jesus Christ as the Servant who was sent to suffer and to restore mankind. It emphasizes what Jesus did rather than what he said; there are many miracles but very few parables (only 9).

The 16 chapters of the gospel can be neatly divided into two parts. In the first 8 chapters, Jesus is essentially traveling north until he is at Caesarea Philippi where he asks his disciples, “*Who do people say that I am?*” (8:27). Peter replies, “*You are the Messiah*”. In the last 8 chapters, Jesus is traveling south, back to Jerusalem all the way to Calvary’s Cross.

- In chapters 1–5, Jesus, after his baptism, calls his first disciples and immediately starts his work in Galilee by healing the sick, forgiving sins, teaching, driving out demons and raising the dead.
- In chapters 6–8, after being rejected in Nazareth, Jesus continues feeding the hungry, walking on water and healing, “*...the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again*” (8:31).
- In chapters 9–10, Jesus appears with Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, and continues healing and teaching. James and John request to sit beside Jesus in his glory, “*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (10:45).
- In chapters 11–13, Jesus enters Jerusalem. He teaches and foretells of the End Time.
- In chapters 14–16, Jesus is betrayed, trialed by Pontius Pilate, and crucified. The earliest complete manuscripts end abruptly at Mark 16:8, with the women fleeing in fear from an empty tomb.

The Gospel of **Luke** was written by Luke, a doctor and a companion of Paul, around 80–100 CE. He used material from the Gospel of Mark (350 verses out of Mark’s 661 verses) and a collection of sayings known as the Q source. This gospel contains more parables than any other gospels (24 in total, of which 18 are unique to this gospel). It shows Jesus as being sympathetic towards Samaritans and Gentiles. The key word in Luke is “Son of Man” which is used 25 times (NIV).

- In chapters 1–2, Luke writes a very detailed account of the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, “*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*” (2:52).
- In chapters 3–4, Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist and tested in the wilderness.
- Chapters 5–8 write of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, where he teaches using parables such as the parable of the Sower (8:4–15), heals the sick and performs miracles, “*...Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him*” (8:25).

- In chapters 9–13, as Jesus sets out for Jerusalem, he heals the sick and teaches using parables such as the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25–37). The Pharisees start to oppose Jesus.
- In chapters 14–18, after a second confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus continues to teach many parables such as the parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11–32).
- In chapters 19–21, Jesus enters Jerusalem, and foretells of the End Time.
- In chapters 22–24, Jesus is arrested and crucified. On the third day, he is resurrected and appears to his disciples before ascending to heaven.

The Gospel of **John** states that it was written by “the disciple whom Jesus loved”, but scholars traced it to a “Johannine community” from around 90–100 CE. John is not one of the three synoptic gospels, but instead was written with more theological substance. Parables are noticeably absent. Chapters 1–12 describe Jesus’ public ministry, and chapters 13–21 describe the events leading to his crucifixion.

- In chapter 1, John declares the divine nature of Jesus, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (1:1). Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist.
- In chapters 2–3, Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee, “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*” (3:16).
- In chapters 4–6, Jesus teaches a Samaritan woman about Living Water, and performs many miracles such as healing an invalid at the pool, feeding the five thousand and walking on water.
- In chapters 7–10, Jesus returns to Jerusalem, where the Jewish leaders dispute his identity.
- In chapters 11–12, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and enters Jerusalem on a donkey.
- The events in chapters 13–17 occur less than 24 hours before Jesus’ death. At the Last Supper, Jesus teaches his disciples many things, such as servanthood and the Holy Spirit, “*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*” (14:6).
- In chapters 18–21, Jesus Christ is arrested and crucified. On the third day, he is resurrected and appears to his disciples. Chapter 21 describes the disciples fishing and seems to be a later addition.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The book of **Acts** was written by Luke, a doctor and Gentile, around 80–90 CE, as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. It is a history of the birth of the Church and its spread from Jerusalem to Europe.

- Chapters 1–5 describe the birth of the church, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*” (1:8). It describes the Pentecost, and Peter preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem.
- In chapters 6–7, Stephen is stoned to death, becoming the first Christian martyr.
- In chapter 8, the believers are scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, and start to preach there, “*Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there*” (8:5).
- In chapters 9–12, Saul sees a vision of Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Peter converts the first Gentile: a Roman centurion named Cornelius. Peter is imprisoned but escapes miraculously.
- In chapters 13–14, Paul and Barnabas begin their first missionary journey to Cyprus, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
- In chapter 15, the Jerusalem Council takes place to confirm that Gentile converts to Christianity are not obliged to keep most of the Law of Moses, including the circumcision of males.
- In chapters 16–18, Paul sets out on his second missionary journey to Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. From Antioch, Paul sets out on his third missionary trip.
- In chapters 19–20, Paul continues on his third missionary journey to Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth. The silversmith riot takes place in Ephesus.
- In chapters 21–26, Paul is arrested and trialed before Governor Felix and King Agrippa.
- In chapters 27–28, Paul sails to Rome where he waits for his appeal to Caesar.

PAULINE EPISTLES

The Epistle to the **Romans** was written by the Apostle Paul in about 56–57 CE to give the believers in Rome a concrete theological foundation on which to live and serve God. Paul shows how all man can be saved through faith in Jesus Christ, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile*” (1:16).

- In chapters 1–3, Paul teaches about the sinful nature of man and God’s wrath against man’s sinful nature, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (3:23).
- In chapters 4–5, Paul teaches that believers are justified through faith in Jesus Christ, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (5:8).
- In chapters 6–8, Paul explains that the Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death, *“the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (6:23).
- In chapters 9–11, Paul teaches that salvation that was previously only known to Israel is now also available to the Gentiles, *“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”* (10:9).
- In chapters 12–16, Paul gives instructions for all Christians about how to serve in the Christian community, *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship”* (12:1).

The **1st Epistle to the Corinthians** was written by Paul from Ephesus in about 53–57 CE, to address and correct the immorality and divisions that had arisen within the church in Corinth.

- In chapters 1–4, Paul warns of division in the church in Corinth, *“One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.” ”* (1:12).
- In chapters 5–7, Paul exposes all the immorality that has been occurring in the church at Corinth, including sexual immorality, and lawsuits with other believers, *“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God”* (6:9–10).
- In chapters 8–12, Paul corrects some doctrines that had caused divisions among the Corinthians, such as food offered to idols, covering the head, observing the Lord’s Supper and spiritual gifts, *“But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head — it is the same as having her head shaved”* (11:5), *“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”* (11:26).
- In chapter 13, Paul writes the beautiful passage to emphasize that love is greater than any spiritual gift, *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”* (13:13).
- In chapter 14, Paul clarifies issues about tongues and worship, *“Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.”* (14:34).
- In chapters 15–16, Paul stresses the importance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins”* (15:17).

The **2nd Epistle to the Corinthians** was written by Paul in about 53–57 CE to affirm his affection for the Corinthians. Chapters 10–13 (the so-called sorrowful letter where Paul defends his apostleship against his enemies) may have been written before chapters 1–9, which express gratitude.

- In chapters 1–7, Paul express joy for his restored relationship with the Corinthians, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”* (5:17).
- In chapters 8–9, he appeals for donation for the Jerusalem church, *“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously”* (9:6).
- In chapters 10–13, Paul defends his Apostleship and boasts of his suffering, *“Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea”* (11:25), *“... For when I am weak, then I am strong.”* (12:10).

The Epistle to the **Galatians** was written by Paul around 50–60 CE to the Christian communities in Galatia. Some Jews had insisted that Gentile believers must obey the Mosaic Law and be circumcised. This must have been an early letter since it concerns how Gentiles can convert to Christianity.

- In chapters 1–2, Paul recalls how he turns from persecuting the church to preaching to the Gentiles, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* (2:20).
- In chapters 3–4, Paul declares that believers are no longer under the Law, *“Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith” ”* (3:11).
- In chapters 5–6, Paul teaches the believers to live by the Spirit, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such*

things there is no law.” (5:22–23).

The Epistle to the **Ephesians** was written by Paul in about 60–62 CE while in prison. It was written to encourage believers to stay united in the Church, the Body of Christ, and to live pure and holy lives. The book consists of three chapters of theological exposition and three chapters of practical advice.

- In chapters 1–3, Paul teaches that the Gentiles have been reconciled to God in the one body of Christ, *“it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.”* (2:8–9).
- In chapters 4–5, Paul gives instructions for Christian living, *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”* (4:32).
- In chapter 6, Paul instructs believers to prepare for spiritual battle, *“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes”* (6:11).

The Epistle to the **Philippians** was written by Paul in about 62 CE as he anticipated his release from prison. It was written to thank the Christians at Philippi for their help, and to encourage their growth.

- In chapter 1, Paul is glad that his suffering has served to advance the gospel, *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (1:21).
- In chapter 2, Paul urges the Philippians to imitate Christ’s humility, *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves”* (2:3).
- In chapter 3, Paul explains that knowing Christ is worth more than anything, *“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ”* (3:7).
- In chapter 4, Paul exhorts the Philippians, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”* (4:4), *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”* (4:6), *“I can do all this through him who gives me strength”* (4:13).

The Epistle to the **Colossians** was written by Paul in about 60–62 CE, to warn the believers in Colossae against deceivers who doubt the deity of Jesus Christ and who impose rules on the believers, *“Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”*.

- In chapter 1, Paul expounds on the supremacy of Jesus Christ, *“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him”* (1:16).
- Chapter 2 warns against following rules, *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day”* (2:16).
- In chapters 3–4, Paul explains how husbands and wives, fathers and children, masters and slaves should behave, *“Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”* (3:18–19).

The **1st Epistle to the Thessalonians** was written by Paul in about 52–54 CE, making it the oldest New Testament book. This letter expresses Paul’s relief that the Thessalonian church was thriving.

- In chapters 1–3, Paul commends the Thessalonians for their faith and love, *“We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1:3).
- Chapter 4 describes Christ’s Second Coming, *“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”* (4:16–17).
- In chapter 5, Paul encourages the Thessalonians, *“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (5:16–18).

The **2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians** was written by Paul in about 52–54 CE, quite soon after his first letter. It was written because some Thessalonians thought that Jesus had already returned.

- In chapters 1–2, Paul warns those believers who think that Jesus has already returned, *“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction”* (2:3).

- In chapter 3, Paul warns against those who have stopped working, “*For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”*” (3:10).

The **1st Epistle to Timothy** was written by Paul, or by someone in the 2nd century, to instruct the young pastor Timothy. It shows a church hierarchy that is more developed than in Paul’s time.

- Chapters 1–2 contain warnings against false teachers and instructions on worship, “*The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith*” (1:5), “*I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet*” (2:12).
- Chapters 3–4 list the qualifications for Overseers and Deacons, “*Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach*” (3:2), “*Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young...*” (4:12).
- Chapters 5–6 give advice for widows, elders and those who are rich, “*Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*” (5:8), “*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...*” (6:10).

The **2nd Epistle to Timothy** was the last letter written by Paul from prison in 67 CE, or by someone in the 2nd century. It advocates endurance as the main quality of a preacher of the gospel.

- Chapter 1 appeals for loyalty to the gospel, “*So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel ...*” (1:8).
- Chapters 2–3 warn of false teachers and end time, “*People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy*” (3:2).
- In chapter 4, Paul knows that his end is near, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*” (4:7), “*When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas...*” (4:13). Soon after this letter, probably in 68 CE, Paul was likely to be beheaded.

The Epistle to **Titus** was written by Paul to Titus in about 66 CE, “*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished ...*” (1:5). It describes the duties of an elder.

- In chapter 1, Paul tells Titus to rebuke false teachers and rebellious people, “*One of Crete’s own prophets has said it: “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.”*” (1:12).
- In chapters 2–3, Paul teaches men, women and slaves to live godly lives, “*Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them*” (2:9).

The Epistle to **Philemon** was written by Paul in about 61 CE. It was written to Philemon as a plea to request forgiveness for his runaway servant Onesimus, who is now a new believer in Jesus Christ.

- In verses 1–7, Paul presents his appreciation and gratitude to Philemon as a brother and worker in Jesus Christ. Philemon was most likely a wealthy member of the church in Colossae.
- In verses 8–25, Paul appeals on behalf of Onesimus, “*no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord*” (vs. 16).

GENERAL EPISTLES

The author of Epistle to the **Hebrews**, traditionally said to be Paul, could be Priscilla, Barnabas, Luke or Apollo. It was written in about 63–64 CE to some Jewish Christians who were persecuted and thinking of returning to Judaism. It shows that Jesus Christ is better than anything that Judaism offers.

- Chapters 1–2 show that Jesus is superior to the angels and yet fully human, “*So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs*” (1:4).
- Chapters 3–6 tell the Jews not to miss out on the promises made to their ancestors, “*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*” (4:12).
- Chapters 7–10 demonstrate that Jesus Christ is greater than any high priest of the old covenant, “*For it is declared: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek”*” (7:17).
- Chapters 11–12 explain that Faith is superior to the work of the old covenant. Chapter 11 is Faith’s Hall of Fame which lists all the faithful individuals from the Old Testament.
- Chapter 13 exhorts the believers to love and persevere, “*Do not forget to show hospitality to*

strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it” (13:2).

The Epistle of **James** was probably written by James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus and the first Bishop of Jerusalem, to Christian Jews — *“the twelve tribes scattered among the nations”*. It is an example of wisdom literature, similar to the Old Testament book of Proverbs.

- In chapter 1, James encourages believers to endure trials and temptations, and to put their faith into action, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* (1:22).
- In chapter 2, James warns believers not to show favoritism, and that *“faith without deeds is dead”*, *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?”* (2:14). This seems to contradict Paul’s doctrine of “justification by faith alone”.
- In chapter 3, James warns believers to tame the tongue and to embrace heavenly wisdom, *“but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”* (3:8).
- In chapters 4–5, James instructs the believers to submit to God, be patient and pray, *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”* (5:16).

The **1st Epistle of Peter** was written to various churches in Asia Minor, probably not by the Apostle Peter, but by one of his disciples. This book is made by combining a sermon (1:3–4:11) and a pastoral letter (4:12–5:14). It encourages believers to endure the *“the fiery ordeal”*.

- Chapter 1 reminds the believers that they were redeemed not with perishable things, *“but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect”* (1:19).
- Chapters 2–3 urge believers to submit to authority, *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.”* (2:13–14).
- Chapter 4 exhorts Gentile believers to live blameless lives, *“For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry”* (4:3).
- Chapter 5 urges believers to *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”* (5:6–8).

The **2nd Epistle of Peter** was written to believers in general, when some of them were impatient that the Second Coming of Christ had still not occurred. It was not written by the Apostle Peter, nor by the author of 1 Peter. He copied extensively from the Epistle of Jude, and regarded Paul’s letters as scripture. It was one of the last New Testament letters to be written, probably around 100–150 CE.

- Chapters 1–2 warn against false teachers, *“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves”* (2:1).
- Chapter 3 explains why the Second Coming of Christ has still not occurred, *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”* (3:9).

The **1st Epistle of John** is a General Epistle, traditionally held to have been written by John the Evangelist, around 95–110 CE, probably from Ephesus. The main themes are love and fellowship with God, and to guard against antichrists.

- Chapter 1 urges the believers to walk in the light, *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin”* (1:7).
- In chapter 2, John warns the believers about the antichrist, *“Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist — denying the Father and the Son.”* (2:22).
- In chapters 3–4, John teaches about the love of God, *“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”* (3:1).
- Chapter 5 testifies that Jesus is the Son of God. *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”* (KJV 5:7) was added in 1522.

The **2nd Epistle of John** was written by John the Elder “*To the lady chosen by God and to her children*” around 85–95 CE, to warn against “Docetism” which denies that Jesus came in the flesh.

- In verses 1–6, John asks the believers to love one another, “*And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.*” (vs. 5).
- In verses 7–13, John warns against deceivers and the antichrist who denies that Jesus came in the flesh, “*I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.*” (vs. 7)

The **3rd Epistle of John** was written by John the Elder to “*my dear friend Gaius*” around 85–95 CE. 3 John is the shortest book of the Bible by word count, though 2 John has fewer verses. It is the only New Testament book which does not contain the names “Jesus” or “Christ”.

- In verses 1–10, John praises Gaius for his “*faithfulness to the truth*” (vs. 3), but criticizes Diotrephes for “*spreading malicious nonsense about us*” (vs. 10).
- In verses 11–14, John encourages Gaius, “*do not imitate what is evil but what is good*” and praised Demetrius who “*is well spoken of by everyone*” (vs. 11–12).

The Epistle of **Jude** was written around 66–90 CE by Jude the brother of James, both of whom are half-brothers of Jesus Christ. Jude originally planned to write about salvation (vs. 3), but switched to warn the church against ungodly people. More than 16 out of its 25 verses reappear in 2 Peter, with the exception of the allusions to two non-biblical books.

- In verses 1–13, Jude rebukes the ungodly people, calling them “*...clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted — twice dead*” (vs. 12).
- In verses 14–25, Jude foretells judgment on the ungodly people, quoting from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch, “*...the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed...*” (vs. 14–15).

APOCALYPSE

The book of **Revelation** is an Apocalyptic Prophecy written by John of Patmos, probably not the Apostle John. It was written to give hope to all Christians, as they underwent persecution during the reign of Emperor Domitian (81–96 CE).

- In chapter 1, John sees a vision, “*and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.*” (1:13).
- In chapters 2–3, John writes to seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, “*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*” (3:20).
- In chapters 4–7, John describes Jesus Christ as the “*Slain Lamb*” who opens the book with 7 seals, each seal bringing a judgment upon the whole Earth: the white horse, the red horse, the black horse, the pale horse, the souls of the slain, earthquake and 7 angels.
- In chapters 8–11, John depicts 7 angels with 7 trumpets, bringing another series of judgments: hail and fire, a huge mountain, a great star, sun turning dark, locusts, four angels and God’s temple.
- In chapters 12–14, John describes the woman and the dragon, the beasts from the sea and the earth: “*This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.*” (13:18).
- Chapters 15–16 depict 7 angels pouring 7 bowls of plagues on to the Earth: boils, sea turning into blood, rivers turning into blood, scorching sun, darkness, the Euphrates drying up and earthquake.
- In chapters 17–19, John describes the fall of Babylon (which is a metaphor for Rome).
- In chapter 20, John describes the judgment for Satan and the dead.
- Finally, in chapters 21–22, John describes the New Heaven, the New Earth and the New Jerusalem, “*He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*” (22:20).

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