



# BBC



## ***Bible Book Club***

*with Sonnie Beverly*

**THE ULTIMATE BIBLE BREAKDOWN**

**GO FROM INTIMIDATED**

*To Intimate With God*

**By understanding the who, what,  
where, when and why's of the  
WORD OF GOD**

*Proverbs 4:7 “...with all thy getting, get understanding”*

# **Bible Book Club**

## **The Ultimate Bible Breakdown** **with Sonnie Beverly**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **HEY GUYS!**

It's time to break it down, cause Jesus will be back soon and very soon. Naw, we won't be reading the scriptures here, per se. Oh, we'll refer to them from time to time, but that's going to be done during your private time with God. He's really specific with you about you and your situations, which are really private and none of our business, so we'll leave that to be dealt with between you and Him. You will become more intimate with Him as you spend time on your own in His Word, in Jesus, in Him, well, they're all the same. Besides, we have to work things out for ourselves anyway, because it's just going to be Him and us, all by ourselves on judgment day. That can be a scary thought, or it can be a wonderful thought, depending on how well you know Him and what He thinks about how you're living the life He gave you, the one Jesus died for you to have. Also, probably what comes up during your private time will come up again. Ain't nobody else's business, so you handle that thing in private.

What we are going to do here at the BBC is to talk about the particular book of the Bible that we are spending our private time with. We'll talk about who wrote it, what was up with them, why they wrote it, when and where they were. Like if you found a note and it had all these details that you had no clue about, but then your friend came upon you reading it and said, "Where did you get that? That's mine." And you knew your friend, what they were into, what they were about, what was going on with them, well, now you totally get the note and it all makes sense. Whereas before you knew who wrote it you had no clue what it was about. But now that you have put two and two together, it's all juicy and you want to know more. Likewise, having that insight about the Bible would make our private time in the Word so much more meaningful. Watch. Your understanding is about to explode as you read the Word knowing a few simple facts beforehand about what you're reading.

# INTRODUCTION

## HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS

Some might think the Bible, with all the difficult language, is out of our league. But once you begin to break it down, it can be very addictive. And what is better to be addicted to than the Bible. Everybody is addicted to something. Let's make the Bible our drug of choice that we need a fix of everyday. We're going to make this thing so easy, comfortable and exciting that it is going to be the next big addiction that everybody is going to get hooked on. Check out how easy, comfortable, and wonderful it is:

## INITIAL BREAKDOWN

Let's state the obvious first and get that out of the way. The Bible is divided into 2 major sections, The Old Testament and The New Testament. Duh! Like who didn't know that. But even before that, how about the word Bible means, "the book". So the Bible is one book, but it is also a collection of many books, 66 to be exact written over a period of 1,600 years by at least 40 different authors.

Okay, lets go over that again.

1 book

2 sections

66 books total

1,600 years

40 authors

Now about those testaments. Testament means, "treaty or covenant". Same as agreement or contract. The Old Testament details God's interaction with the people of Israel. The New Testament details Jesus and His early followers called Christians. Yep, that's us. See God entered into a contract with the people of Israel in The Old Testament, but His new contract is made with anyone who will commit to following Jesus. The terms of the agreement are spelled out in each testament, so in order to fulfill our part of the agreement we need to read the terms because God is going to fulfill His part. And unless we do our part, there's no agreement. Now how smart are you already!

# THE TESTAMENTS

## THE OLD & THE NEW

These bad boys are like old familiar neighbors that live close, but we may have never been in their houses. Their front doors could have been opened and we may have peaked in from the outside. We probably went up on the porch, knocked on the door, could have possibly even stepped inside and looked around maybe, but not likely, to give them some mail that erroneously got put into our mailbox. Just familiar, neighborly stuff without ever really going into the house, to hang out, to sit down for a meal, to visit someone who may have been in bed recuperating from some ailment. Familiar, not intimate.

So if somebody who knows you both sees your neighbor's address on your desk or somewhere and says, "I know Joe Blow who lives right next door, do you know him?" Your first response will more than likely be, "Yep, I know him", but you really don't. You are familiar with him, you live next door, but since you never spent any time with him, you can't possibly know him, what he's into, what he's about. That's how a lot of people are with the Testaments. They're familiar, but don't really know them simply because they don't spend time with and in them. I bet if more folks knew and believed Jesus when He said, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you can ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you," they would be all up in that piece every chance they got trying to get something. I know I am. All the time. Right up in there trying to get everything I can get. **AND THAT'S A GOOD THING, CAUSE THAT'S WHAT IT'S FOR.** Everything worth anything I got, came up out of the Word. Let me explain real quick like. I'll use my kids as an example. Anybody can get kids and don't need the Word to get them. But I got anointed kids who have their own personal relationships with God and are on their own special missions for God. I shudder to think if it wasn't for the Word, where my kids would be, cause quiet as it's kept, well maybe not so quiet, but I've been called crazy. Thank God and His Word for saving my kids from my craziness. You can get anything you want out of the Word. It's not selfish or greedy. It was God's plan all along to get you what you want. If more people got that revelashaun, fewer Bibles would be collecting dust and more Bible would get worn out, which is a real good thing.

## ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Who speaks Hebrew? Greek? About as much as I speak Chinese and Russian. Thank God for the translators. The Old Testament was translated from Hebrew. The New Testament from Greek. Ask me how I keep that straight. I make up stuff. I made up OH! to remind me that Old goes with Hebrew. And Ninja, I don't know, maybe the kids were watching the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles when I made it up, but the N and the J, which I substituted for the G for Greek reminds me that The New Testament was translated from Greek. Make up your own way to remember which Testament was originally Hebrew and which was originally Greek. Whatever works for you, it's all good.

# THE TESTAMENTS

## CONCORDANCE & THE AMPLIFIED VERSION

You are going to need a concordance. The Amplified version of the Bible gets the job done too. It'll give you the long version of the scripture, already translating the words that could mean a whole bunch of things. But a concordance gives the meaning of the particular word use in a specific passage of scripture cause stuff always gets lost in translation. I recommend Strong's Concordance cause that tip got every word that's in the Bible up in there. So like if you read the word "suffer" in the NT (you gotta get it enough by now for me to abbreviate OT for Old Testament and NT for the New one) you now know to go to the Greek section and look up the word suffer to see that it doesn't mean what we think suffer means at all. Then look it up in the Hebrew section and it'll mean something altogether different. So you can't just go by what you think and already know. You're going to need to put forth some effort to get intimate with God. And I'm going to stop now before you think its hard, instead of totally awesome and fascinating.

Obviously, people who say the Bible contradicts itself either have never cracked one open, have been listening to lazy haters or chose to seek out what somebody besides God wanted them to get out of it. Their choice. You get what you want out of the Bible. It's downright tailor made for you. And we are going to get in there and get our tailor made blessings here at the BBC.

# IN THE BEGINNING

Let's get started. Stuff will pop up all the time in my head to say, okay, God will put stuff in my spirit to say, now that's much better. So as it comes up, I'll pass it on and you can do whatever you want to do with it. So let's gon' lay this foundation cause nothing should be built unless it's built upon a rock solid foundation. That is and always has been my motto. I am not into wasting time or nothing else. And to build something on shaky ground, well that's just such a waste.

## FIRST FIVE

The first five books of the Bible, (1) Genesis, (2) Exodus, (3) Leviticus, (4) Numbers and (5) Deuteronomy are called the Pentateuch (**pen-ta-tuke**). I'm embarrassed to say that when I was a junior in college, college I tell ya, somebody said to me, "It's in Deuteronomy." My response was, "Do the who?" I'm still embarrassed when I think of that. College, bout to graduate, in my twenties, ain't never heard of Deuteronomy. What a sad commentary. Well because of that I had the twins, as soon as they could talk, reciting all 66 books of the Bible. If you think I made them suffer because of my mistakes, then go ahead, call Child Protective Services and they are going to tell you to give me a medal. Can you believe folks actually thought I was too hard on my kids? Said they were little soldiers in boot camp. I sure did have "Drill Sergeant" printed on a baseball cap. So why all the neighborhood kids could be found all up in my house at any time of the day or night? Cause I whipped they butts into shape with the Word of God and their parents encouraged it.

Pentateuch is a combination of two Greek words meaning "five" and "scrolls". Don't ask me why I went through all the OH! and Ninja stuff, only for them to use a Greek word to describe the first five books of the OT. Just to throw you off, but don't get thrown. Stick to your way of keeping OT/Hebrew separate from NT/Greek. Pentateuch is also referred to as "The Book of the Law", "The Law of Moses", "The Law of God" or simply "The Law". Guess why? Because all five books are filled with God's commands and instructions for the OT nation of Israel. Yep, the 10 Commandments are all up in there somewhere. Yall know I'm going to ask you where in a pop quiz.

It's not all laid out like the constitution or state codes of law. We are not about to go to law school. Actually, the Pentateuch are stories about God's people and way cool reading. They are the foundational stories of the Bible, like what happened to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Joseph, Noah, to Moses, the people of Israel at the Red Sea, stories that resonate throughout the rest of the OT and into the NT. You will learn a lot about God and how He works in our world and in our lives reading these stories. Now folks will argue, but for the most part, it's been proven that Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible. Yep, the essential material in the Pentateuch came from God through His servant Moses with later additions obviously from other biblical writers such as the account of Moses' death in "Do the who?" 34. Haters say Moses couldn't have written it cause he was dead. Duh! So they discount all that Moses did write. Don't be petty, be an adult when you read your Word. It's so much more beneficial.

# GENESIS

## **AUTHOR**

Moses

## **DATE WRITTEN**

1450 – 1410 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It starts with the creation of the world and every living creature in it. It records the first marriage, the first sin, the first consequences of sin, and the first reference to God's future plan to redeem humanity. After recounting the stories of the Flood and the Tower of Babel, Genesis also tells the story of the birth of a nation, Israel. The story begins as God calls Abraham, the father of the Israelites, to leave his hometown Ur (located in modern-day Iraq), and move to Canaan, the land God promised his descendants. Eventually, the Redeemer of the world would come from the descendants of Abraham. The story then shifts to the exploits of Isaac, Abraham's son, and then to Jacob, Abraham's grandson. Genesis concludes with the remarkable experiences of Joseph.

## **PURPOSE**

To show how the world and everything in it came about and to show God's desire to have people set apart to worship him.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The creation of the world and humanity (1:1 - 2:25)
- B. The fall of Adam and Eve (3:1 - 4:26)
- C. The history of fallen humanity up to the Flood (5:1 - 9:29)
- D. The spread of people around the world (10:1 - 11:32)
- E. The life of Abraham (12:1 - 25:18)
- F. The life of Isaac (25:19 - 26:35)
- G. The lives of Jacob and Esau (27:1 - 37:1)
- H. The life of Joseph (37:2 - 50:26)

# EXODUS

## **AUTHOR**

Moses

## **DATE WRITTEN**

1450 – 1410 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Every country has its own national history, a record of the events leading to the nation's independence. The book of Exodus records Israel's national history, recounting the earliest years of the nation and of God's covenant with them. Exodus takes its name from the main event of the book: the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The book begins with a short account of how the Israelites became slaves in Egypt. The focus then shifts to the birth and life of Moses, God's chosen leader for Israel. From a burning bush in the Sinai Desert, God called Moses to return to his homeland of Egypt and lead the Israelites to freedom. But Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites and set in motion God's ten devastating plagues upon Egypt. The final plague not only changed Pharaoh's mind but became a memorial of God's deliverance, celebrated in the observance of Passover. Once set free, the Israelites traveled to the wilderness of Sinai to worship God. But Pharaoh chased the Israelites to the Red Sea, where God displayed his power by parting the sea for the Israelites to cross and then closing it over the pursuing Egyptians. The Israelites were then free to travel to Mount Sinai. There God established his covenant with them, giving them the Ten Commandments and plans for the Tabernacle. After the Israelites constructed the Tabernacle, God filled it with his glory, signifying his presence with them.

## **PURPOSE**

To record the events of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and development as a nation.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Israel's bondage in Egypt (1:1 - 22)
- B. The birth and calling of Moses (2:1 – 7:7)
- C. The plagues, the Passover, and the Exodus (7:8 – 15:21)
- D. The trip to Sinai and the giving of the law (15:22 – 24:18)
- E. Instructions for the Tabernacle (25:1 – 31:18)
- F. Israel's sin and repentance (32:1 – 35:3)
- G. The building of the Tabernacle (35:4 – 40:38)

# LEVITICUS

## **AUTHOR**

Moses

## **DATE WRITTEN**

1445 - 1444 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Our entire lives should glorify God, from our religious worship to our daily tasks. With this in mind, the book of Leviticus was written as a handbook for the priests and Levites (religious servants) of Israel. Leviticus gives detailed rules concerning the daily lives of the Israelites and special procedures for the worship of the Lord. It provides instructions for offering sacrifices. Leviticus also describes the proper methods for the Israelites to observe major festivals and holidays and for the priests to carry out the duties of their office.

## **PURPOSE**

To outline the Levites' duties in worship and to teach the Israelites how to live holy lives.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The sacrificial system (1:1 – 15:33)
- B. The great Day of Atonement (16:1 - 34)
- C. Various regulations (17:1 – 20:27)
- D. Rules for the priests (21:1 – 22:33)
- E. Rules concerning the festivals (23:1 – 25:55)
- F. Obedience, vows, and tithes (26:1 – 27:34)

# NUMBERS

## **AUTHOR**

Moses

## **DATE WRITTEN**

1450 - 1410 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

The discontented whining of a young child can be difficult to ignore. Likewise, the childlike whining of the Israelites in the wilderness characterizes the book of Numbers. This book picks up where Exodus leaves off, with the Israelites camped at the base of Mount Sinai. From here the Israelites journeyed to the wilderness of Paran, south of the Promised Land. Scouts were sent to explore the Promised Land and give a report on its inhabitants. When they returned to the camp, their report was not favorable. The people began to doubt God's ability to give them their inheritance, and they complained against him. Because of their sin, God condemned them to wander in the wilderness until the generation of complainers died off and a new generation took their place. Forty years later they slowly made their way back to Canaan, this time ready to obey God's commands. After winning some important battles east of the Jordan River, the Israelites prepared to enter the heart of the Promised Land they had waited so long to see.

## **PURPOSE**

To tell the story of how Israel prepared to enter the Promised land, how they sinned and were punished, and how they returned again to enter the land.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The census of the men for battle (1:1 – 2:34)
- B. Special regulations for the Israelites (3:1 – 10:10)
- C. The journey to Canaan and the great rebellion (10:11 – 14:45)
- D. Wandering in the wilderness (15:1 – 19:22)
- E. The journey to the plains of Moab and Balaam's oracles (20:1 – 25:18)
- F. Preparations in Moab for entry into Canaan (26:1 – 36:13)

# DEUTERONOMY

## ("Do The Who?")

### **AUTHOR**

Moses (final summary by Joshua)

### **DATE WRITTEN**

1407 - 1406 B.C.

### **CONTENT**

The book of Deuteronomy records the covenant between God and Israel. It calls each new generation of Israel to remember who God is and what he has done for them. Through a series of speeches, this fifth and final book of Moses summarizes the events that led up to this moment in Israel's history: the eve of Israel's entry into the Promised Land. Moses exhorted the Israelites to remain faithful and obedient and called them to rededicate their lives to the task God had given them. Then Moses led the people in worship. Finally, Moses appointed his successor, Joshua, and went off to a mountain by himself to view the Promised Land from a distance before he died.

### **PURPOSE**

To remind the people of what God had done for them and to encourage them to rededicate their lives to him.

### **OUTLINE**

- A. Moses' first address (1:1 – 4:49)
- B. Moses' second address (5:1 – 26:19)
- C. Summary of various laws (27:1 – 28:68)
- D. Moses' third address and the appointment of Joshua (29:1 – 32:43)
- E. Moses' final words and death (32:44 – 34:12)

# OT DRAMA

## MY OT BOYS

The OT is all good, but the NT is my favorite because it is all about my Jesus! I love me some Jesus, cause he sho nuff love himself some Sonnie. I shudder to think what my life would be like without him ruling it, reigning over it, driving it, leading, guiding and directing it. What a scary thought to have to figure out this sicko/psycho world without his wisdom and knowledge deep down on the inside of us. I ain't budging til he tells me to, in any and everything that I do. Now, don't get me wrong, I love the OT too. I am terribly impressed with a few of the characters in particular. Elijah cracks me up. Like in I Kings 18, when he challenged the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel to see whose God was God. It was about 450 of them against just him and they both had to prepare a bull to be burned, but they couldn't set fire to it. The true God had to burn it up. Elijah told the 450 prophets of Baal to go first. So they prepared it, and called on their god who ain't showed up yet. This was in I Kings around 562 B. C. Baal still ain't showed up in 2006 A. D. Elijah was like, "Where yo' boy Baal at? Maybe you should shout louder. Surely he's a god. Perhaps he is deep in thought, or he is relieving himself." Elijah said their god had went to the bathroom. LOL! I bout fell out when I read that. Then he said, "Maybe he is away on a trip, or he might be sleep. Somebody need to wake his butt up." I was like, you better talk smack Elijah! But that's what God make you do when you know he got your back. When I get to heaven I want to meet Elijah so I can give him a high five cause he had jokes. And of course when he prayed, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant..." the Bible said, IMMEDIATELY the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the bull, the wood, the stones, the dust, even licked up the water that Elijah had poured in the ditch, just to show off. Everybody, including Baal's 450 dropped down on their knees to worship our God, like we ought to do when he shows out in our lives.

I also want to meet King David cause that was one bad dude. He is my kind of man. I don't like bad boys per se, especially the ignorant ones of today, but David was just so dangerously cool with his. Like in I Samuel 25 when David protected this rich dude named Nabal's property and flocks out of the kindness of his heart and then asked Nabal for some food and Nabal was like, "Heck Naw!" So David said, "Get your swords!" He was going to jack Nabal up. But what got me and let me know that David won't nobody to be playing with was when he said, "May God deal with me severely if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!" I was like, DANG! He bout to kill up everybody. Nabal done really pissed him off. The Godfather ain't have nothing on David who was bout to take Nabal totally and completely out. Until Nabal's wife, Abigail interceded and begged David to spare them. She got some stuff and ran out to meet him and fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say. I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool..." So David had mercy because of Abigail, Nabal's wife. Husbands, you might want to read that part again. But even with all the crap David did, God still said David was a man after his own heart. David truly loved

# OT DRAMA

God, and God loved adulterous, murdering, gangster David. You might want to ask God about that during your private time.

## REVELASHAUN

I ask God about stuff that doesn't seem fair that I read all the time. Like I didn't think it was fair that Moses didn't make it into the Promise Land after all he went through to get them there, with the "Let My People Go" speech he had to give over and over, parting of the Red Sea, busting up the 10 Commandments and stuff. God told me this when I asked the question, so you won't find it nowhere in the Bible cause this is some private stuff between me and God that I'm just sharing with you, so don't get it twisted. When I asked God why he didn't let Moses go in, God was like, Moses was so sick and tired of them whining, complaining, ungrateful kids of mine, he had no problem coming home to be with me. Later for a Promise Land. Can't no Promise Land beat being in the presence of God. I've been okay about Moses every since with that revelashaun that I received because I asked for it. That was for me, and I'm just saying, cause I was curious and the Bible can't print everything. That would be too much paper. Get your own revelashaun, but amateurs need to stick to the Word. It's dangerous in the deep water. But that's the kind of revelashaun you can get out here in the deep. I love it.

# A HARD HEAD EQUALS A SOFT .....

I'm bout to get my John the Baptist on. **REPENT!!!** That was it.

So check it out yall; times change, fashions change, the weather changes, the whole dang world changes, but guess what, **GOD DOES NOT CHANGE!**

So however He dealt with his hard-headed children in the OT, that's how He deals with us, His NT hard-headed children, except for one **TOTALLY AWESOME** difference. God's OT children did not have the **BLOOD OF MY JESUS** to save them from His wrath. **The Blood's** stock should have just jumped through the roof of your brain when I said that. Those who are not children of God, I ain't even talking to you.

Nor did they have the **Power of the Holy Spirit** on the inside of them to lead, guide and direct them through the minefield of life. With all the dirt we do, and God knows we live in this sicko/psycho world that is designed to trip us up with every step we take and trap us in destructive habits and addictions, so He has provided us a way of escape, through **His Word**, the **Blood of Jesus** and the **Power of the Holy Spirit**. In the acknowledgments in my book, *Saved Folk in the House* I call them **my survival tools**. Cause I can good and guarantee you, you **AIN'T GON' SURVIVE** without them. Good and guarantee you!

To see just what has happened, is happening, and will happen to hard-headed folks who think they can survive this life by ignoring God, check out what happened over and over and over again to God's hard-headed children in the OT. That's what the whole OT is about, so you can avoid the same fate, not only by your own obedience, but by His favor, grace and mercy guaranteed by His survival tools, according to your obedience. They didn't have the survival tools in the OT that we have today so we really don't have any excuse to be stupid by disobeying God. You do know it is totally stupid to disobey God don't you? Instead of the survival tools, God sent them Judges, Kings and Prophets to instruct and warn them to do right or else. Did they listen? **NO!** Did they suffer the consequences? **YES!** How much more will we suffer the consequences if we don't listen and obey God's Word.

# SURVIVAL TOOLS

For me, **The Word** represents my instructions on how to navigate my way through this minefield. Remember I told yall to read a Psalm and Proverb everyday? You don't even know the ignant mess I done avoided just by getting a head's up from those books before I faced the day and applying that wisdom to situations as they arose instead of going there with the fools who hadn't read their Psalms and Proverbs. Proverbs ensures that you keep a stone cold advantage over fools, cause that's all it does, compares the wise man to the fool. So if you do what the wise man in Proverbs does, a fool can't touch you. And there's a many rich, good-looking, apparently got it going on, ignant fools walking around here. The media keeps them in your face so you can want to be like them. HA! Don't be no fool. The very first proverb tells you to avoid them. Unfortunately, a lot of folks are so blinded by the bling, that's they goal. They need to read they dang proverbs and see where them fools gon' end up. The biggest and most effective trick of the enemy these days is instant gratification, so fools ain't too much worried about where they gon' end up, that's why they fools. JUST SAY NO, yall. To whatever has a negative impact on your life, now or later. If you don't know what that is, the Word, especially Proverbs will tell you.

The **Blood of Jesus** represents my "get out of jail free" card when I inadvertently or on purpose (due to a brain fart), break God's law and SERIOUSLY, REALLY, TRULY, HONESTLY, repent. Aaahhhhh, repentance. Who knows what that means? Some think it means that you're sorry. Sorry comes from guilt. Don't be sorry. Ask God for forgiveness, then STOP what you're doing that's wrong and turn back to what you are suppose to do. That's repent in a nutshell. Re = go back, as in return, Pent = top, as in penthouse. Go back to the top where God has placed you via your survival tools, on top of your situations, on top of the tricks of the enemy, on top of all the crap, live above the gossip, the lies, the pettiness designed to keep you down, live on top of all that mess and when you fall off, just repent and get back on top of it. Don't wallow in guilt feeling freakin' sorry. That's stupid and a total waste of time. Get back up there and go on with your life in Christ. Are you feeling pretty smart and powerful right now with this information the enemy has kept from you?

# SURVIVAL TOOLS

Now the **Power of the Holy Spirit** represents the “S” on my chest that allows me to walk through life knowing I got more than my own limited human KSA (knowledge, skills and abilities) to get me through. You see I didn’t include man’s wisdom in KSA because I don’t consider it an asset, but the enemy’s best tool to use against him. Almost 100 % of the time when man thinks he’s wise in his own right, he is so easy to corrupt on a small or large scale. I have told plenty of brothers throughout the years “You think you slicker than, Jesus”, haven’t I? You know who you are. I won’t call your name cause I got somebody else to make an example of, but that’s what happened to that fool Lucifer/satan. The biggest most ridiculous fool out there today is Donald Trump if you need a real life flesh and blood example of somebody who thinks they so smart, yet is so dumb. Please don’t believe that “you’re fired” hype. Money and TV ratings don’t make you smart. It makes you wise in your own eyes, thus headed for destruction, good and guaranteed.

Naw, I don’t need no wisdom of my own. I want all of mine replaced with God’s wisdom, which never, ever lets me down and I can’t take no credit for it. I’m also backed by the whole heavenly host, including angels, the Holy Spirit, God’s favor, miracle working power, etc. There’s too much going on in the world today, too much noise, we will never be smart enough to keep up with and avoid the enemy on our own. We have to employ our survival tools and flip it on the enemy so that he tries to avoid us, cause we are awesome, powerful children of the most high God.

Now that’s how you work it. Empower yourself with God’s survival tools and bust the enemy straight in his face when he comes messing with you. He won’t come around too often, I good and guarantee you.

**HISTORICAL BOOKS**  
Joshua – Esther

# JOSHUA

## **AUTHOR**

Joshua (except for the ending, possibly written by Phinehas the high priest)

## **DATE WRITTEN**

1380 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

The book of Joshua is about leadership, more specifically, about Joshua's leadership of the Israelites. At the opening of the book, Moses had already died, and Joshua had been appointed his successor. While the Israelites waited on the plains of Moab, Joshua prepared them for battle. Once they were ready, Joshua led them across the Jordan River to begin their conquest of the land God had promised them. The Israelites then fought three campaigns: (1) one in the central region, (2) one in the south, and (3) one in the north. After the initial victories, Joshua and his people divided the land among the tribes of Israel. As the book comes to an end, Joshua is old and close to death, and he urges the Israelites to follow the Lord their God.

## **PURPOSE**

To give the history of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.

## **OUTLINE**

- Mobilizing Israel and entering the Promised Land (1:1 – 5:15)
- The central campaign (6:1-8:35)
- The southern campaign (9:1-10:43)
- The northern campaign (11:1-15)
- Summary and division of the land (11:16-22:34)
- Joshua's final words and death (23:1-24:33)

# JUDGES

## **AUTHOR**

Samuel

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Uncertain, perhaps around 1000 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Often the greatest heroes appear in the midst of the worst chaos and confusion. This is true in the book of Judges, where true heroes and heroines repeatedly are called upon to save the day after the people have fallen into sin. After Joshua's armies conquered Canaan, the twelve tribes of Israel settled their allotted portions of land. They had no earthly king, because God was to serve as their king. But this required that the people follow and obey God, a situation that rarely existed during this period. The people soon became unfaithful to God and practiced the ways of their pagan neighbors. To punish their disobedience, God allowed the Israelites' neighbors to oppress them. The Israelites then repented and asked God to rescue them, and so he raised up various leaders among them to drive out the enemy. These leaders were known as judges. They not only defeated their enemies and drove them from the land, but they turned the Israelites' hearts back to God. But time after time, soon after the people were delivered from their oppressive neighbors, they lost their zeal for God, and the whole cycle began again.

## **PURPOSE**

To show the pitfalls of Israel's lack of central authority, the consequences of sin, and God's willingness to rescue those who repent.

## **OUTLINE**

- Summary of current events (1:1 – 3:6)
- B. The first judges – Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar (3:7- 31)
- C. Deborah and Barak's victory (4:1-5:31)
- The story of Gideon (6:1-8:35)
- The story of Abimelech (9:1-57)
- The stories of Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (10:1-12:15)
- The story of Samson (13:1-16:31)
- Anarchy in the land (17:1-21:25)

# RUTH

## **AUTHOR**

Samuel (according to Jewish tradition, although the genealogy suggests it was written after his death)

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Between 1375 - 1050 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

God often uses the most unlikely people to accomplish his plans and purposes. In this book, Ruth, a Moabite widow, willingly leaves her homeland to care for her mother-in-law, Naomi, who is also a widow. Being a Moabite, Ruth was not a part of God's chosen people, Israel, but she chose to follow God anyway. God rewarded her for her faithfulness and her kindness to her mother-in-law. First he provided for Ruth's physical needs. As Ruth went out to get food, she came upon a field, where the owner allowed her to gather as much leftover grain as she needed. But God's provision did not stop at Ruth's immediate physical needs. The owner of the field, Boaz, also happened to be a relative of Naomi. Boaz took a sincere interest in Ruth, and eventually they were married. God continued to show his faithful love to Ruth and Boaz by honoring them through their descendants, King David and, hundreds of years later, Jesus Christ.

## **PURPOSE**

To show that God rewards those who trust in him.

## **OUTLINE**

- Naomi's tragedy (1:1-10)
- Ruth's loyalty to Naomi (1:11-22)
- The friendship of Naomi's relative Boaz (2:1-3:18)
- The marriage of Boaz and Ruth (4:1-17)
- The genealogy of King David (4:18-22)

# 1 SAMUEL

## **AUTHOR**

Uncertain, some have suggested Samuel and the prophets Nathan and Gad

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Uncertain, perhaps around 1000 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

The choices people make say a lot about their character. The book of I Samuel is full of choices, some good and some bad. The first significant choice in 1 Samuel is made by Hannah, a woman who was unable to have children. She chose to cry out to God for a child. God heard her prayer and granted her request. Grateful to God for his goodness, Hannah dedicated her child, Samuel, to the Lord from the time he was born. So Samuel grew up among the priests at the Tabernacle, and eventually he himself became the leading priest. Near the end of Samuel's life, the Israelites rejected Samuel's sons as judges over Israel and asked him to appoint a king over them. Samuel warned the Israelites that a king would oppress them, but they chose to have one anyway. Thus began the history of Israel's kings. Samuel anointed a tall, handsome man named Saul to be Israel's first king. At first Saul appeared to make some good decisions. But soon he began to make some very bad choices, and God brought an end to his reign. David, a shepherd from Bethlehem, was chosen to take Saul's place. Saul made several attempts on David's life; but by the end of the book, Saul and his son are dead, and David is in line to become the next king.

## **PURPOSE**

To record the life of Israel's last judge, Samuel, the reign and decline of Israel's first king, Saul, and the selection and preparation of Israel's greatest king, David.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Samuel's early ministry and the Philistine war (1:1 – 7:17)
- B. King Saul's early successes (8:1-15:35)
- C. Saul's decline and the rise of David (16:1-20:42)
- D. Saul's persecution of David (21:1-24:22)
- E. David's growing strength and the death of Saul (25:1-31-13)

# 2 SAMUEL

## **AUTHOR**

Uncertain, some have suggested Nathan's son Zabud and the prophets Nathan and Gad

## **DATE WRITTEN**

930 B.C., soon after David's reign (1050-970 B.C.)

## **CONTENT**

Among the godly men and women mentioned in the Bible, King David stands as one of the most prominent. The prophet Samuel had said that God wanted "a man after his own heart," and David was that man. The book of 2 Samuel tells King David's story, covering a period of approximately 40 years, the bulk of David's reign as king. It begins with David's being proclaimed king of Israel. Soon after his inauguration, David consolidated his position against rivals to the throne. After conquering Jerusalem, David made it his capital and brought the sacred Ark of the Covenant there. Then he defeated the Philistines, neighbors who had harassed the Israelites for hundreds of years. But 2 Samuel also describes the darker side of David's career as well, including his affair with Bathsheba and the rebellion led by his son Absalom. The book comes to a close near the end of David's long reign.

## **PURPOSE**

To record the history of David's reign, to validate the Davidic dynasty, and to depict David as the ideal example of good leadership.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. David's first acts as king (1:1 – 6:23)
- B. God's covenant with David (7:1-29)
- C. David's victories over his enemies (8:1-10:19)
- D. David's sin with Bathsheba and Nathan's rebuke (11:1-12:25)
- E. David's troubled reign (12:26-21:22)
- F. David's final praise (22:1-23:7)
- G. Further problems in David's reign (23:8-24:25)

# 1 KINGS

## **AUTHOR**

Uncertain, some have suggested Jeremiah or a group of prophets

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Uncertain, possibly shortly after King Jehoiachin's release in 562 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Effective leadership often has more to do with character than with accomplishments. At least that seems to be the case in the book of 1 Kings. The books of 1 and 2 Kings form one book in the Hebrew Bible, covering the period when kings ruled Israel after David's reign. First Kings opens with the death of David, followed by the reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. The book then records Solomon's death and the division of the kingdom into northern and southern halves (Israel and Judah). This division resulted from a foolish decision by Solomon's heir, Rehoboam. Despite wise advice from his older advisers, Rehoboam chose to follow a policy of harsh rule, and the northern tribes rebelled. First Kings then begins a chronicle of each king who ruled Israel or Judah, giving him a rating of either good or bad, depending on his faithfulness to God and the covenant. The book closes with a great conflict between Elijah the prophet and Ahab, king of Israel.

## **PURPOSE**

To contrast the lives of the godly and ungodly kings throughout the history of Israel and Judah and to demonstrate the consequences of idolatry and wickedness.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The death of David (1:1-2:11)
- B. The reign of Solomon (2:12-11:43)
- C. The division of the kingdom (12:1-24)
- D. The rivalry between Israel and Judah until the reign of Ahab (12:25-16:28)
- E. Elijah and Ahab (16:29-22:40)
- F. The reign of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah (22:41-53)

# 2 KINGS

## **AUTHOR**

Uncertain, some have suggested Jeremiah or a group of prophets

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Uncertain, possibly shortly after King Jehoiachin's release in 562 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

If you have ever seen a salmon struggling to swim upstream, you have an idea of what it was like to be a good king in Israel or Judah. In 2 Kings, most of the kings simply go along with the current of evil. Only a handful struggle to follow the God of Israel, rejecting the idolatry, immorality, and complacency that surrounds them. In order to counter this widespread wickedness, the prophets often take center stage in 2 Kings, warning kings and others about the consequences of sin. Ultimately, however, wickedness prevails, and 2 Kings describes two tragedies that changed the face of Israel's history. In 722 B.C. the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and in 586 B.C. the southern kingdom of Judah was dismantled by the Babylonians. As in the book of 1 Kings, all these events are interpreted as being the direct result of the idolatry and wickedness that pervaded the nations of Israel and Judah.

## **PURPOSE**

To contrast the lives of the godly and ungodly kings throughout the history of Israel and Judah and to demonstrate the consequences of idolatry and wickedness.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The end of Elijah's ministry (1:1-2:11)
- The ministry of Elisha the prophet (2:12-8:15)
- The kings of Israel and Judah until the fall of Israel (8:16-17:41)
- The kingdom of Judah until the fall of Jerusalem (18:1-25:30)

# 1 CHRONICLES

## **AUTHOR**

Ezra

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 430 B.C., recording events that occurred from about 1000 to 960 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Understanding your family's history is important. Knowing where your ancestors came from and what they accomplished provides a sense of identity, heritage, and destiny. These are some of the reasons the writer of Chronicles penned this extensive account of Israel's family history. The book of 1 Chronicles begins with a series of genealogies that trace the roots of both King David and the Levites. More than just names, this list represents the chosen people of God, the ancestors of God's covenant people. After the genealogies comes the account of Israel's first two kings Saul and David. Their successes and failures are shown to stem largely from their spiritual choices. Special emphasis is given to the admirable accomplishments of David's reign. The book closes with David's vision for the Temple that is to be built.

## **PURPOSE**

To unify God's people, to trace the roots of King David and of the twelve tribes, and to teach that genuine worship ought to be the center of individual and national life..

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The genealogies (1:1 – 9:44)
- B. The death of Saul (10:1-14)
- C. The reign of David (11:1-22:1)
- D. The Temple and the Levites (22:2-27:34)
- E. David's final years (28:1-29:30)

# 2 CHRONICLES

## **AUTHOR**

Ezra

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 430 B.C., recording events from the beginning of Solomon's reign (970 B.C.) to the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.)

## **CONTENT**

Christians are often amazed at the ignorance of "primitive peoples" who worship idols. Meanwhile, we ourselves devotedly serve idols of wealth, prestige, and self-fulfillment. Second Chronicles calls us back to wholehearted, single-minded devotion to God. Continuing the history of Israel and Judah that was begun in 1 Chronicles, this book recounts the glory of Solomon's reign, highlighting the construction and dedication of the Temple. It also records the actions of the kings of Judah who came after Solomon, taking special note of each one's attention to the religious affairs of his nation. Second Chronicles highlights the deeds of Hezekiah under whose reign an extended revival took place. The writer also describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people to Babylon. The book ends on a positive note, however, as King Cyrus of Persia decrees that the people of Judah are free to return home. As the writer of 2 Chronicles provides his readers with a history of Israel's past, he indirectly urges his readers to rededicate their lives to the one true God.

## **PURPOSE**

To unify the nation around true worship of God by showing the rewards of faithfulness and the consequences of sin.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The reign of Solomon (1:1-17)
- B. The building and dedication of the Temple (2:1-7:22)
- C. The glory of Solomon's reign (8:1-9:31)
- D. The remaining kings of Judah (10:1-36:23)

# EZRA

## **AUTHOR**

Ezra

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 430 B.C., recording events from about 538 to 430 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Many great men and women never gain celebrity status. They do their deeds in relative obscurity, yet their contributions profoundly impact the lives of those who come after them. Ezra was just such a person. The book of Ezra details the Israelites' return to the land of Judah after their captivity in Babylon. The book opens with the return of a large group of exiles and the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel. Halfway through the book, we are introduced to Ezra, a scribe schooled in the laws of Moses. The book records how Ezra dealt with the problems that arose, such as marriages between Israelites and non-Israelites. After many struggles regarding the rebuilding of the Temple, the project was finally completed and dedicated to the glory of God.

## **PURPOSE**

To show God's faithfulness to his promise to restore his people to their land.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The first return of the exiles to Jerusalem (1:1-2:70)
- B. The rebuilding of the Temple begun (3:1-13)
- C. The work on the Temple halted (4:1-24)
- D. The completion and rededication of the Temple (5:1-6:22)
- E. The ministry of Ezra (7:1-10:44)

# NEHEMIAH

## **AUTHOR**

Possibly Ezra, although Nehemiah's words are written in first person, suggesting that he contributed to the book.

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 430 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

It is easy to analyze, scrutinize and talk about all the problems in the world, but we really need people who will do something about them. The book of Nehemiah shows what happens when such a person steps forward. The story begins as Nehemiah learns of a problem that greatly distresses him: The city walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and the city was defenseless. The small number of Jews who had returned to their homeland after decades of Babylonian captivity desperately needed the walls to be rebuilt. Nehemiah knew that the task could not wait, so he obtained permission from the king of Persia and traveled to Jerusalem. There he surveyed the situation and began to reconstruct the walls. Despite several setbacks from the enemies of Jerusalem, Nehemiah completed the task within a very short time, and the walls were dedicated to the glory of God. Ezra also led the people to recommit themselves to following God's laws.

## **PURPOSE**

To chronicle the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of its walls and to encourage the people to remain faithful to God's laws.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The arrival of Nehemiah in Jerusalem (1:1 – 2:20)
- B. The work on the walls begun (3:1-7:73)
- C. The reading of the law and national repentance (8:1-10:39)
- D. The dedication of the walls and Nehemiah's reforms (11:1-13:31)

# ESTHER

## **AUTHOR**

Mordecai, according to tradition (although some have suggested Ezra or Nehemiah, based on similarities in writing style)

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 470 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

With drama, intrigue, romance, and murder, the book of Esther tells of the near destruction of the Jewish people. It tells how a Jewish woman named Esther risked her life to save her people. Esther and her uncle lived in the land of Persia, where the Jews were in exile. After Vashti, queen of Persia, insulted her husband, the king, she was deposed, and the king began looking for a new queen. Esther was selected for her beauty, but she kept her Jewish nationality a secret. Meanwhile, a wicked man named Haman became the king's advisor and began plotting the extermination of all Jews in the empire. Esther's uncle learned of the plot and begged Esther to intervene, pleading, "Who can say but that you have been elevated to the palace for just such a time as this?" (4:14). So Esther risked her life and approached the king about the matter. The king heard her plea, and the Jews were saved while Haman was hanged on a gallows he had prepared for Esther's uncle. This remarkable deliverance of the Jews is celebrated by the Jewish feast of Purim.

## **PURPOSE**

To demonstrate God's sovereignty and his loving care for his people.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Esther becomes queen (1:1 – 2:23)
- B. Haman's plan to destroy the Jews (3:1-4:3)
- C. Esther's plan to save the Jews (4:4-7:10)
- D. The deliverance of the Jews and the feast of Purim (8:1-10:3)

POETRY  
Job – Solomon

# JOB

## **AUTHOR**

Uncertain; Jewish tradition regards Moses as the author; others have suggested Job himself as the author

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Uncertain. Some of the events recorded suggest it was written during the time of the patriarchs, about 2000 to 1800 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

The problem of human suffering is pondered by most everyone at some time or another. The book of Job addresses this ancient and difficult problem. It tells the story of Job, a godly man who endured an enormous amount of suffering while remaining faithful to God. The story begins with Job losing his children, his many possessions, and even his own health, all within a very short period of time. Only Job's wife escaped the ruin that Satan inflicted upon him. Then Job's 3 friends came to comfort him and to reflect on the purpose for his suffering. They each considered the basic question: Why must we endure suffering when God is powerful enough to do something about it? Job's wife simply declared it all unfair, advising Job, "Curse God and die" (2:9). Each of Job's 3 friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, delivered speeches accounting for Job's misery. A young man, Elihu, tried to summarize the situation with yet another explanation. But all of them failed to provide Job with a satisfactory answer. Finally, God himself spoke directly to Job, asking him a long list of questions that forced him to recognize his finite understanding of life. Job realized that ultimately God is in charge and knows what he is doing. So Job remained silent and stood in awe of God's sovereignty. In the end, God restored Job's health, possessions, and family.

## **PURPOSE**

To demonstrate God's sovereignty and address the problem of innocent suffering.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The onset of Job's misery (1:1 – 2:13)
- B. First set of speeches (3:1-14:22)
- C. Second set of speeches (15:1-21:34)
- D. Third set of speeches (22:1-31:40)
- E. Elihu's speech (32:1-37:24)
- F. The Lord's response to Job (38:1-41:34)
- G. The restoration of Job (42:1-17)

# PSALMS

## **AUTHOR**

According to Jewish tradition, David wrote 73 Psalms; Asaph wrote 12; the sons of Korah wrote 9; Solomon wrote 2; Heman (with the sons of Korah), Ethan, and Moses each wrote 1; and 51 Psalms are anonymous. The New Testament ascribes 2 of the anonymous Psalms (Psalms 2 and 95) to David (see Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7)

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Between the time of Moses (about 1440 B.C.) and the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.)

## **CONTENT**

Throughout our life, we all experience a wide range of emotions, such as joy, anger, peacefulness, frustration, despair, happiness and anxiety. These feelings don't typically obey carefully scripted creeds. Music and poetry often seem to be the only way to express them fully. The book of Psalms speaks to this part of the human experience through the poetic words of people who offered their feelings to God. Are you angry about something? The book of Psalms includes several prayers that express this same emotion (see Psalm 35). Are you afraid? So was David when he wrote Psalm 2. Are you frustrated by injustice? Psalm 79 laments this same situation. Likewise, Psalm 19 and Psalm 104 celebrate the awesome power of God as it is revealed in his creation. This collection of hymns and prayers seems to touch every corner of the human soul. As with the psalm writers themselves, these honest expressions of feeling will draw you closer to the God who made you.

## **PURPOSE**

To provide poetry for the expression of praise, worship, and confession to God.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The first book of Psalms (1-41)
- B. The second book of Psalms (42-72)
- C. The third book of Psalms (73-89)
- D. The fourth book of Psalms (90-106)
- E. The fifth book of Psalms (107-150)

# PROVERBS

## **AUTHOR**

Solomon, Agur, and Lemuel

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Possibly about 960 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Knowledge is good, but wisdom is even better. Knowledge can help you pass tests and accomplish tasks, but wisdom will guide you through the most important decisions in life. The book of Proverbs was written by Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. It contains hundreds of short, simple statements about how to live wisely and an assortment of longer passages that express wisdom with a bit more detail. These proverbs, however are more than just wise sayings of the sort we find in most cultures. They are not a haphazard collection of commonsense directives. These proverbs expressly state, “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (9:10). Respect for God is the foundation for these wise sayings. They help the reader to distinguish between two paths: the way of the wise and the way of the fool. They deal with almost all the major areas of life, including growing up, parenting, social justice, wise speech, work, marriage, sexuality, and money.

## **PURPOSE**

To apply divine wisdom to daily life and to provide moral instruction.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction and theme of Proverbs (1:1 – 7)
- B. Proverbs mainly for parents and children (1:8-9:18)
- C. The first collection of Solomon’s wisdom (10:1-22:16)
- D. Two collections of wise sayings (22:17-24:34)
- E. The second collection of Solomon’s wisdom (25:1-29:27)
- F. The wisdom of Agur and Lemuel (30:1-31:9)
- G. A portrait of a truly good wife (31:10-31)

# ECCLESIASTES

## **AUTHOR**

Solomon

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Possibly about 935 B.C., late in Solomon's life

## **CONTENT**

There are few experiences in life that are more universal than disappointment. It seems as if everyone has experienced a broken promise, an unfulfilled expectation, or a shattered dream. The "Teacher" in the book of Ecclesiastes recorded his own experiences with disappointment as he tried to find peace apart from God. In the book, the Teacher uses a series of examples, wealth, wisdom, popularity, pleasure, and shows how each of them ultimately ends in disappointment if it becomes the sole reason for one's existence. After pondering this dilemma for several chapters, the author finally comes to the conclusion: "Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the duty of every person" (12:13). It appears that the Teacher abandoned any hope in worldly pursuits and decided that glorifying God provides the only lasting meaning in life.

## **PURPOSE**

To teach that life is meaningless apart from God.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The pointless cycle of life (1:1 – 11)
- B. The futility of life (1:12-2:23)
- C. Weariness, oppression, and inhumanity (2:24-4:12)
- D. The futility of popularity, religiosity, and wealth (4:13-6:12)
- E. The futility of life (7:1-11:10)
- F. Conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands (12:1-14)

# SONGS OF SOLOMON

## **AUTHOR**

Solomon

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Possibly about 960 B.C., early in Solomon's reign.

## **CONTENT**

Popular sexual behavior today is a sad distortion of God's plan established in the Garden of Eden. Contrary to God's design, it has become a freely traded commodity rather than an exclusive, private treasure shared between a committed husband and wife. God values romantic love and sexual union, and the Song of Solomon expresses the beauty of this love as God intended it. It is a song about love, courtship and marriage, using many vivid metaphors to describe these things. These poetic verses describe a couple's desire for one another, the struggles they overcome, the tender feelings that love awakens in them, and the joy they find in being together. The "young women of Jerusalem" also add some observations of their own. Many scholars believe this poem should also be understood as an illustration of Christ's love for the church.

## **PURPOSE**

To celebrate romantic love as God intended it and to picture God's love for his people.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The bride describes herself and her feelings for her fiance' (1:1-2:7)
- B. The king invites his bride for a springtime trip; the bride dreams of losing the king (2:8-3:5)
- C. Solomon describes his bride (3:6-5:1)
- D. The bride describes her husband (5:2-6:3)
- E. The king describes his wife (6:4-7:9)
- F. The desires of the woman (7:10-8:4)
- G. The power of love and the rewards of purity (8:5-14)

# MAJOR PROPHETS

## Isaiah – Daniel

I feel these prophets. Telling folks what God done told you to tell them while they looking at you like you crazy is as bad as it got for me. But these guys were persecuted to the utmost. I ain't saying I'm no prophet, I just understand them. All I'm doing is sharing what works for me with those who may or may not want to see if it will work for them too. That's it!

# ISAIAH

## **AUTHOR**

Isaiah or his followers

## **DATE WRITTEN**

The events of chapters 1-39 occurred during Isaiah's ministry, so they were probably written about 700 B.C. Chapters 40-66, however, may have been written near the end of his life, about 681 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Isaiah's long ministry lasted almost 60 years and covered the reigns of four kings, including Hezekiah. The prophecies of Isaiah were primarily given to the people of Judah, although his messages applied to the northern kingdom of Israel as well. Isaiah lived through the dark days of the civil war between Israel and Judah (734-732 B.C.) and saw the destruction of Israel by Assyria in 722 B.C. Isaiah used the grim lesson of Israel's fall to teach King Hezekiah of Judah to trust in the Lord. Isaiah also spoke about events that took place after his own time, including the coming exile of Judah to Babylon and the deliverance that God would provide afterward. Isaiah also warned the nations surrounding Israel and Judah that they, too, would be judged for their actions. In the end, however, Isaiah offered a message of hope and comfort for Judah, promising that God would restore them after their punishment was completed. Isaiah's messages like those of most prophets, made him few friends during his lifetime. Nevertheless, he faithfully continued to bring God's message to the world.

## **PURPOSE**

To call the nation of Judah back to God and to tell of God's salvation through the Messiah.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Prophecies concerning Judah and the nations (1:1 – 23:18)
- B. God's judgment upon the world's sin (24:1-27:13)
- C. Prophecies concerning Judah and Israel (28:1-35:10)
- D. Isaiah's life during Hezekiah's reign (36:1-39:8)
- E. The future comfort of Judah and the salvation of God's people (40:1-66:24)

# JEREMIAH

## **AUTHOR**

Jeremiah or his followers

## **DATE WRITTEN**

During Jeremiah's ministry, about 627-586 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

By any human measure of success, the prophet Jeremiah was a colossal failure. For most of his life he was poor, unpopular, isolated, and persecuted. Jeremiah lived for 40 years in Judah just before the people were exiled to Babylon, and his prophecies were collected into the book that now bears his name. The main message of his prophecies is simple: It is too late to avoid God's discipline so accept it and turn from your sins. After a time of punishment however, God will restore Judah. Jeremiah often used figurative actions to communicate this message, such as shattering a clay jar to show how God will shatter Jerusalem. Sadly to say, Jeremiah's messages were not well received. His audience discounted his warnings, locked him up in stocks, and even threatened his life. As a result, Jeremiah lived to see the invasions by the Babylonian armies, the deportations of his people, the slaughter of Jerusalem's inhabitants, and the destruction of the Temple. Because of his troubles, Jeremiah has often been called "the weeping prophet".

## **PURPOSE**

To urge people to repent of their sins and turn back to God.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Prophecies concerning Judah (1:1 – 25:38)
- B. Prophecies at the end of Judah's existence (26:1-42:22)
- C. Jeremiah's prophecies in Egypt (43:1-45:5)
- D. Prophecies concerning the nations (46:1-51:64)
- E. A historical appendix (52:1-34)

# LAMENTATIONS

## **AUTHOR**

Jeremiah

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

A lamentation is a sad funeral song. Jeremiah wrote this lamentation to express his grief over the tragic destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its inhabitants to Babylon. Through acrostic poetry, the book of Lamentations graphically describes the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah spared his readers little detail as he recalled the horrible tragedy. There is very little comfort in Jeremiah's lament, although in chapter 5 his prayer does look beyond the desolate ashes of Jerusalem, and Jeremiah pleads to God, whose throne endures forever.

## **PURPOSE**

To record in graphic detail the consequences of sin and to show that God suffers along with his people.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Jerusalem's sorrow and desolation (1:1 – 22)
- B. God's anger at Jerusalem's sin (2:1-22)
- C. Jerusalem's hope is in God's mercy (3:1-66)
- D. Jerusalem's former glory and present humiliation (4:1-22)
- E. Jeremiah's prayer for deliverance (5:1-22)

# EZEKIEL

## **AUTHOR**

Ezekiel

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 571 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Like stubborn children refusing to obey their father, the people of Israel often refused to listen to God. And like a loving parent, God repeatedly called his people back to obedience. He sent prophets, like Ezekiel, to preach messages of judgment and restoration. According to his book, Ezekiel was a priest who was among the captives taken to Babylon when the Jews were deported in 597 B.C. There in Babylon God called him to be a prophet, and he began to warn his people that Jerusalem's judgment was not yet complete. His preaching was not well received by the Jews who were with him in captivity. They thought he should be giving messages of comfort and hope, not judgment. But Ezekiel's dire predictions came true, as Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C. From then on the people listened carefully to his preaching. After this Ezekiel's message changed from one of judgment to one of comfort and hope. The worst was past; it was time to begin again.

## **PURPOSE**

To announce God's judgment on Israel and other nations and to proclaim restoration for God's people.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The call of Ezekiel (1:1 – 3:27)
- B. Prophecies against Israel and Jerusalem (4:1-24:27)
- C. Prophecies against foreign nations (25:1-32:32)
- D. The promise of return and restoration (33:1-39:29)
- E. The renewed Temple in the New Jerusalem (40:1-48:35)

# DANIEL

## **AUTHOR**

Daniel

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 535 B.C., recording events that occurred from about 605 to 535 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

A stranger in a strange land, Daniel lived during a time when the Jewish people seemed to have little hope. They were living as captives in Babylon, hundreds of miles from home, with only promises from God that they would ever see their homeland again. In this book, Daniel and his friends are taken to Babylon as young men. Although they were captives, they received an excellent education and rose to high positions in the Babylonian and Persian governments. Because of their faith in the God of Israel, they were persecuted and even sentenced to die. God rewarded them for their faithfulness, however, and they were rescued from certain death. Daniel had several other encounters with King Nebuchadnezzar, and God revealed his sovereignty in each instance. The second half of the book records Daniel's visions of future events. These dreams and the stories of Daniel and his friends provided encouragement for the Jews to remain faithful to God in the midst of persecution.

## **PURPOSE**

To demonstrate through Daniel's experiences that God is sovereign over the whole earth and to encourage the Jews to remain faithful to God despite persecution.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Daniel's life in Babylon (1:1 – 6:28)
- B. Daniel's visions of the beasts (7:1-8:27)
- C. Daniel's prayer and prophecies of years (9:1-27)
- D. Daniel's vision of God and the future (10:1-12:13)

# MINOR PROPHETS

## Hosea - Malachi

I had to highlight a part of the content of Zephaniah because it absolutely applies to today. The Babylonians were the OT terrorists, to help you relate. And if we don't wake up, all of the prophets done told us what is going to happen. God ain't changed. But MY GOD is SSSOOOOOOOOOOO GOOD! Because over and over, then in the OT and still today, He never leaves us without HOPE!!! Just AWESOME!

# HOSEA

## **AUTHOR**

Hosea

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 715 B.C., recording events from about 753 to 715 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

The book of Hosea is a tragic love story with a happy ending. Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel before its fall in 722 B.C., and his ministry spanned some 40 years. He was a contemporary of Amos, Isaiah, and Micah. Hosea was called by God to find a wife, and so he married a woman named Gomer. After bearing three children to Hosea, Gomer became unfaithful, and the marriage was shattered. Hosea used this experience with Gomer to illustrate God's experience with Israel. The first half of Hosea's book describes his marriage to Gomer, the birth of their children, and her act of unfaithfulness. The second half of the book draws lessons from this true story. Hosea warned of stern judgment for Israel's unfaithfulness, for Israel had turned to other gods just as Gomer had left Hosea for other men. In the end, however, Hosea urged Gomer to repent and receive forgiveness and restoration. Likewise, Israel would receive forgiveness and restoration if the people would return to God.

## **PURPOSE**

To illustrate God's love for his sinful people.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Hosea's tragic homelife (1:1 – 3:5)
- B. Israel's rebellion against God (4:1-8:14)
- C. The judgment to come (9:1-13:16)
- D. The promised restoration (14:1-9)

# JOEL

## **AUTHOR**

Joel

## **DATE WRITTEN**

During Joel's ministry, possibly from about 835 to 796 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Displays of power can be impressive, but none will be more impressive than the coming "day of the Lord." On that day God will call all to account for their rebellion and sin. For those who have forsaken God, it will be a terrible day of judgment. This great day is the focus of Joel's prophecies. Joel used a plague of locusts to illustrate the coming of this terrible judgment, and he urged God's people to listen - how much better to repent and live! But Joel's prophecies contain messages of hope as well as warning. If the people would respond to his warning, God would be merciful. God promised, "I will give you back what you lost" to the locust (2:25). God's desire was to bless his people, not to destroy them. That was the reason for the locusts - to cause people to turn away from sin while there was still time.

## **PURPOSE**

To warn people of God's impending judgment unless they turned from their sins.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The plague of locusts and its meaning (1:1 – 2:17)
- B. Immediate blessing promised (2:18-27)
- C. Future blessing promised (2:28-3:1)
- D. The judgment of Israel's enemies (3:2-21)

# AMOS

## **AUTHOR**

Amos

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Probably during the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah of Judah (about 760 to 750 B.C.)

## **CONTENT**

Amos was not someone normally considered prophet material. He was a shepherd and a sycamore-fig farmer, not an educated priest or a religious servant. But Amos was faithful to his calling, and he delivered God's message to the people. Amos was a contemporary of prophets Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. Like Hosea, he directed his message mainly to the northern kingdom of Israel although he himself was from the southern kingdom of Judah. Amos begins his prophecy by pronouncing judgment upon the surrounding nations; then the prophecy focuses on Israel itself. Amos denounced the injustice, corruption, greed, and false worship that were running rampant in Israel. Amos's prophecy continues with a series of visions, and the book ends with the expressed hope that Israel will heed these warnings.

## **PURPOSE**

To pronounce God's judgment upon Israel for their complacency, idolatry, and oppression of the poor.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction (1:1 – 2)
- B. Judgment upon the nations and Israel (1:3-2:16)
- C. The prophet's message of judgment (3:1-6:14)
- D. Five visions of judgment (7:1-9:10)
- E. A future hope (9:11-15)

# OBADIAH

## **AUTHOR**

Obadiah

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Often the most painful betrayals come from those who are closest to us. At least this was how Obadiah felt about the Edomites' attack on Jerusalem. In this short book, Obadiah foretold Edom's doom for treacherously plundering Jerusalem after its fall to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, and so they were related by blood to the Israelites. Of all people, the Edomites should have come to Jerusalem's aid. Instead, they took part in the destruction and gloated over Jerusalem's demise. The Edomites had failed to realize that their survival depended upon their humility before almighty God, not upon their "invincible" mountain fortress.

## **PURPOSE**

To condemn Edom for its cruel treachery toward Jerusalem.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Edom's destruction foretold (1:1 – 9)
- B. The sins of Edom (1:10-14)
- C. The day of the Lord and Judah's restoration (1:15-21)

# JONAH

## **AUTHOR**

Jonah

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 785 to 760 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

If you were given an assignment to preach the gospel to a band of convicted killers, would you do it? This is similar to the assignment God gave Jonah. Jonah was a prophet born in Israel (see 2 Kings 14:25) and called by God to preach to the people of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. Not only was Assyria the most powerful empire in that day, it was also ruthlessly violent with its conquered enemies. Israel was soon to enter Assyria's path of destruction, and so it is unlikely many Israelites would have accepted Jonah's task. The book of Jonah relates how he first tried to flee his calling and travel by ship to another country. But God sent a storm to change his plans, Jonah was thrown overboard, and a giant fish swallowed him and saved him from drowning. The fish then spewed Jonah onto the shore, and Jonah went to Assyria. To Jonah's dismay, the king and citizens of Nineveh heard his message and repented, and so God spared them from their promised destruction. In anger, Jonah went outside the city, still hoping it would be destroyed. God rebuked Jonah, however, and expressed his concern that all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, come to know him.

## **PURPOSE**

To show that God wants all people to come to know him.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Jonah's flight from God (1:1 – 17)
- B. Jonah's prayer in the fish's belly (2:1-10)
- C. Jonah's renewed commission and success (3:1-10)
- D. Jonah's reaction and God's concern (4:1-11)

# MICAH

## **AUTHOR**

Micah

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Possibly during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (742-687 B.C.)

## **CONTENT**

Can a loving God hate sin? According to the prophet Micah, God most certainly can – and does. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah who preached to Israel and Judah during the eighth century B.C. He lived in a small town named Moresheth, which lies south of Jerusalem. Micah denounced the oppression, pride, greed, corruption, false piety, and arrogance of the two kingdoms. He summoned the priests and leaders to appear before God and plead their case, for they were about to be judged for their wickedness. God would indeed hold everyone accountable for their actions. But Micah also made it clear that God's love never dies. Judgment comes only after we have been given many opportunities to repent. And once God's punishment has been given, he will restore his people to himself again and will forgive their sins.

## **PURPOSE**

To warn God's people that judgment is coming and to offer pardon to all who repent.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The judgment of God (1:1 – 16)
- B. God's hatred of sin (2:1-3:12)
- C. Future blessings (4:1-5:1)
- D. The coming Messiah (5:2-15)
- E. God's judgment on Israel (6:1-7:20)

# NAHUM

## **AUTHOR**

Nahum

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Sometime during Nahum's prophetic ministry (probably between 663-654 B.C.)

## **CONTENT**

Be warned – God will indeed repay those who have inflicted terrible suffering on others. This was the message Nahum spoke against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians had destroyed Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and exiled its inhabitants to distant lands throughout the empire. They were ruthlessly violent to their enemies and showed no mercy to them. They were guilty of arrogance, cruelty, idolatry, murder, lies, treachery, superstition, and oppression. For this wickedness, the book of Nahum rails against the people of Nineveh and pronounces God's judgment upon them.

## **PURPOSE**

To pronounce God's judgment upon Assyria.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. God and the punishment of evil (1:1 – 15)
- B. The destruction of Nineveh (2:1-13)
- C. The sin of Nineveh (3:1-19)

# HABAKKUK

## **AUTHOR**

Habakkuk

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Between 612 and 589 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

If God exists, why do the wicked so often seem to prosper? This is a question commonly asked by those who are sensitive to social justice. The prophet Habakkuk was quite sympathetic to such concerns. Habakkuk preached during the last days of Judah before its fall to Babylon in 586 B.C. He foresaw the impending doom and was troubled by two things: why God allowed the people of Judah to sin, and how God could use a sinful nation like Babylon to punish Judah. Desperate for answers, Habakkuk boldly and confidently took his complaints directly to God. God answered Habakkuk's questions, asserting that he would judge all people but also that righteousness would ultimately prevail. It might not happen immediately, but it would happen. This assurance, along with his glimpse of God's sovereign rule, gave Habakkuk the courage and hope to trust in God's plans regarding the dark days ahead.

## **PURPOSE**

To show that God is still sovereign despite the apparent triumph of evil.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Sin and punishment (1:1 – 11)
- B. Babylon and God (1:12-2:20)
- C. Habakkuk's triumphant faith (3:1-19)

# ZEPHANIAH

## AUTHOR

Zephaniah

## DATE WRITTEN

Probably near the end of Zephaniah's ministry (640-621 B.C.), when King Josiah's great reforms began.

## CONTENT

Although dark days loom ahead, there is hope for the future. This was the basic message of Zephaniah to the people of Judah. Zephaniah was a prophet in the last decades before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians. The opening stanzas of his prophecies bring bad news. Judah had completely abandoned the Lord and chose to worship many false gods. **In addition, they had dismissed obedience to God as irrelevant. They were materially prosperous and saw no need to repent of their sins in order to please God. Consequently, Zephaniah's message to them was harsh: When the "day of the Lord" came, Judah would be completely destroyed.** Even the animals would be killed as the Babylonian troops pillaged the land. This dreadful day would also visit several nations surrounding Judah as well. **But God would not leave them without hope. Judah would eventually be restored and would return to the Lord.**

## PURPOSE

To shake the people of Judah out of their complacency and urge them to return to God.

## OUTLINE

- A. The coming judgment of God (1:1 –2:3)
- B. Judgment upon the nations and Jerusalem (2:4-3:8)
- C. Blessing promised to Judah (3:9-20)

# HAGGAI

## **AUTHOR**

Haggai

## **DATE WRITTEN**

520 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Do you have trouble finishing the projects you start? This was a definite problem for the people of Haggai's day. Haggai lived in Jerusalem shortly after many Jews had returned from exile in Babylonia. Those who returned had begun to rebuild the Temple, but opposition soon mounted from local enemies. Eventually the Jews abandoned the project when it was only half finished. After several years, Haggai, along with a prophet/priest named Zechariah, began a campaign to continue work on the Temple. In this book, Haggai admonishes the governor, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Jeshua, to finish building a house for the Lord. Apparently, the combined efforts of Haggai and Zechariah worked, and the Temple was completed and rededicated in 516 B.C.

## **PURPOSE**

To call the people to complete the rebuilding of the Temple.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The prophet's rebuke for neglecting the Temple (1:1 – 11)
- B. The favor of God (1:12-15)
- C. Encouragement for the builders (2:1-9)
- D. Blessing to follow the work (2:10-19)
- E. God's judgment on the nations (2:20-23)

# ZECHARIAH

## **AUTHOR**

Zechariah

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Chapters 1-8 were written from about 520 to 518 B.C. Chapters 9-14 were written about 480 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

From time to time God gives us glimpses of the future. Usually these glimpses come through the words of prophets like Zechariah. His book includes some of the most graphic images of the future found in the Bible. Zechariah was both a priest and a prophet to the Jews living in Jerusalem after their exile in Babylonia. He was a contemporary of the prophet Haggai and assisted him in campaigning to finish the Temple. In his book, Zechariah explains that Israel was exiled for its sinful practices, but he promises that God himself would eventually transform his people and usher in a new age of holiness throughout the earth. The first half of Zechariah's book describes eight night visions and discusses the ritual of fasting. Several of the visions focus on the reconstruction of the Temple and the reinstatement of the priesthood. The second half of Zechariah's book describes the age to come, when God will transform Israel into a truly holy society and the nations will come to worship God in Jerusalem. Zechariah saw the reconstruction of the Temple as the dawn of this new era. Zechariah also told of a great "shepherd," or Messiah, who would come to reign over a kingdom of perfect harmony.

## **PURPOSE**

To give hope to God's people by revealing God's future deliverance.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction (1:1 – 6)
- B. Eight prophetic visions (1:7-6:8)
- C. The prophetic coronation of Jeshua (6:9-15)
- D. Various messages of judgment and hope (7:1-10:12)
- E. The coming Messiah and his rejection (11:1-13:9)
- F. The ultimate triumph of the Messiah (14:1-21)

# MALACHI

## **AUTHOR**

Malachi

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 430 B.C.

## **CONTENT**

Spiritual health requires constant maintenance. Otherwise we quickly lapse into apathy and insincerity. This was a problem in the time of Malachi as well. After returning from exile in Babylonia, the Jews rebuilt the Temple and reinstated the priesthood. Everything seemed to be going well. But after a few generations passed, it appears that many Jews became complacent about their faith. Even the priests became corrupt and careless in carrying out their duties. So Malachi prophesied against the people's insincere worship, their refusal to tithe the full amount, and their lack of concern for God's commands. He did not just condemn them for their failures, however; he also promised them great blessings for obedience. Malachi also foretold the coming of Elijah, who would prepare the way for the great "day of the Lord."

## **PURPOSE**

To confront the people with their sin of insincere worship and corruption and to restore their relationship with God.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. God's love and Israel's shame (1:1 – 2:9)
- B. Israel's sins denounced (2:10-17)
- C. Future judgment predicted (3:1-6)
- D. The neglected tithe (3:7-18)
- E. The coming of Elijah foretold (4:1-6)

# LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS

## **NT GOT IT GOING ON**

The NT starts off with the Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four books are why folks say the Bible contradicts itself. This is why, and what a lot of folks don't get about the Gospels. Say you are one of four children, grew up in the house together, same parents. Imagine that you and your siblings are named Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You are Matthew, Mark is the energetic one, always on the go; Luke is the smart one, always studying, gets straight 'A's; and John is the quiet, sweet, helpful one whom your mother absolutely adores. John's a mama's boy. So daddy comes home in a bad mood one night, ranting and raving about something that happened at work and your mother sends you kids to bed and then ministers to her husband to calm him down. Well, when the same story is told the next day by four different kids, you are going to get four different versions of the same story. That's what the Gospels are. Four different versions of the same story. No contradictions, just different versions. And folks will debate you to death cause they don't get that simple little fact. See how much of a difference a little knowledge makes.

When my boy Peter denied Jesus, don't ask me why I like the crazy people in the Bible cause Peter was sho nuff crazy, yet Jesus totally loved him and said he was going to build his church on his rock, Peter. Well, Matthew said Jesus told Peter he was going to deny him before the cock crowed. Period. While Mark said Jesus told Peter he was going to deny him before the cock crowed twice. Folks be seriously debating over how many times the cock had to crow before Peter denied Jesus. Done forgot the whole point of the story. So maybe Matthew was talking to somebody and didn't hear the part about how many times the cock had to crow. He wrote what he heard, like Mark wrote what he heard. Does that make either one of them wrong? The Bible contradictory? Perspective and perception are key to understanding. If you have a clue when you read your Bible, you are going to have so much fun hanging out with God and nem.

# MATTHEW

## **AUTHOR**

Matthew

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Between 60 – 65 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

The birth of Jesus of Nazareth ushered in the long-awaited age of a new kingdom on earth, the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew's Gospel records the advent of this new kingdom in the teachings and actions of Jesus, the Messiah. Since the Kingdom of Heaven is a major theme throughout this Gospel, Matthew was careful to show how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament passages that speak of the Messiah, the ruler of the kingdom. He recounts the family history of Jesus to show his royal lineage. After describing the Virgin Birth, Matthew details Jesus' Messianic baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, and the early days of his ministry. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his disciples how life in the kingdom should be lived. Jesus also performed many miracles and taught the people various parables, or stories, that further illustrate what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Matthew was careful to point out that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, would be included in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus' death and resurrection conclude Matthew's Gospel, along with Jesus' command to make disciples from every nation.

## **PURPOSE**

To present Jesus as the Messiah, who has brought the Kingdom of Heaven to earth.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The early life and ministry of Jesus (1:1 - 4:25)
- B. The Sermon on the Mount (5:1 - 7:29)
- C. General teaching, parables, and discourses (8:1 – 18:35)
- D. Journey to Jerusalem and final warnings (19:1 – 23:39)
- E. Prophecies of things to come (24:1 – 25:46)
- F. Jesus' death and resurrection (26:1 – 28:20)

# MARK

## **AUTHOR**

John Mark

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Between 55 – 65 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Many passages of Scripture speak of Jesus as the exalted Lord, but Mark's Gospel presents another side of Jesus as well, his servanthood. Mark was not one of the twelve disciples, but his Gospel is traditionally believed to be compiled from the teachings of the apostle Peter. Mark set the pace for his Gospel from the very start, skipping the details of Jesus' birth and moving straight into his baptism and ministry. Throughout this Gospel, Jesus is constantly on the move, healing the sick, confronting demons, feeding large crowds, giving time to "outsiders," and tirelessly responding to requests for help and guidance. Mark includes several passages of teaching as well, but these are largely overshadowed by the accounts of Jesus' actions. Mark makes it clear that Jesus is indeed the Son of God; no one else could have done what Jesus did. But Jesus' actions and teaching also point toward a core theme of the book: "For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many" (10:44-45). The book comes to a close with Jesus' death and resurrection, thus completing a basic outline of the life of Jesus Christ.

## **PURPOSE**

To present Jesus Christ as both servant and Son of God by recounting his ministry and teachings in a basic biographical outline.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus (1:1 - 13)
- B. The Galilean ministry of Jesus (1:14 - 9:50)
- C. Trip to Jerusalem and entrance into the city (10:1 – 11:26)
- D. Conflicts in the city (11:27 – 12:44)
- E. Prophecies of things to come (13:1 - 37)
- F. Jesus' death and resurrection (14:1 – 16:20)

# LUKE

## **AUTHOR**

Luke, a Gentile physician and associate of Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 60 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Like an investigative journalist compiling a story from several informants, Luke composed his Gospel from the accounts of several eyewitnesses of Jesus' life. Luke, a Gentile physician who traveled extensively with the apostle Paul, wrote his Gospel for a man named Theophilus (1:3), most likely another Gentile believer. After consulting several eyewitnesses and accounts of Jesus' life, Luke wrote this fresh account of his life and ministry. Since both Luke and Theophilus were Gentiles, it is not surprising that this Gospel has a very universal flavor to its stories and teachings of Jesus. Luke also highlights Jesus' concern for the oppressed and outcast such as women and the poor, and there is a notable emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. Luke was careful to give precise dates to the events recorded in his Gospel, beginning with an extensive account of Jesus' birth and the only canonical story from Jesus' childhood years. Luke arranged his account of Jesus' ministry in the same general order as the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, and he added a lengthy account of Jesus' trip to Jerusalem. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the book leaves the disciples rejoicing and waiting for God's Holy Spirit to fill them.

## **PURPOSE**

To present an accurate account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Jesus' birth and boyhood (1:1 – 2:52)
- B. Jesus' baptism and temptation (3:1 – 4:13)
- C. Jesus' Galilean ministry (4:14 – 9:50)
- D. Jesus' trip to Jerusalem (9:51 – 19:27)
- E. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (19:28 – 20:47)
- F. Jesus' prophecies of things to come (21:1 -38)
- G. Jesus' death and resurrection (22:1 – 24:53)

# JOHN

## AUTHOR

John the apostle, son of Zebedee and brother of James the apostle

## DATE WRITTEN

Around 90 A. D.

## CONTENT

Each Gospel was written with a different agenda in mind, but only John, “the disciple Jesus loved” (21:20), made his agenda explicit: “But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life” (20:31). Because of this goal, John’s Gospel has a different flavor than the other three Gospels. John was less concerned with Jesus’ actions than with what his actions said about him. John speaks of Jesus’ miracles as “signs,” and he records lengthy teachings of Jesus, including seven “I am” statements about himself. John opens his Gospel with an account of the preexistent Christ, “the Word,” the unique Son of God, who became human and made God the Father known to us. After recounting some details of John the Baptist and his ministry, John describes Jesus’ baptism. At this point the general outline of John’s Gospel breaks sharply from those of the other three Gospels, rearranging some of the events and including different material. For instance, John’s Gospel records more than one trip to Jerusalem by Jesus, unlike the other Gospels. After a lengthy description of Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples, John’s Gospel records Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. The book closes with some encounters between Jesus and his disciples.

## PURPOSE

To show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that all who believe in him will have eternal life.

## OUTLINE

- A. Prologue (1:1 – 14)
- B. Jesus’ pre-Galilean ministry (1:15 – 4:54)
- C. Jesus’ Galilean ministry and conflicts in Jerusalem (5:1 – 10:42)
- D. Jesus’ raises Lazarus from the dead (11:1 - 57)
- E. Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and final teachings (12:1 – 17:26)
- F. Jesus’ death and resurrection (18:1 – 20:10)
- G. Jesus’ resurrection appearances (20:11 – 21:25)

**END OF THE GOSPELS**

# THE REST OF THE NT

## LETTERS FROM PAUL

All of my favorites are named Paul. My favorite Temptation, my favorite Beatle, and my favorite NT leader. Actually, that's a no brainer because as far as the NT goes, Paul was the man having written over half of it. So I cheated and we will discuss cheating later. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books of the NT, a lot from prison. Talk about using your time wisely. If there is anybody in the Bible that I can relate to, it's Paul. Okay, I could really relate to Elijah talking smack too. Before Shaun got a revelashaun (LOL!) he was trying to get me to chill on the emails cause he said I talk too much junk. Yeah, like Elijah, plus Shaun was just mad cause I was always referring to him to make my points. Tough. Nobody else had expressed a problem with it cause they knew where the delete button was. But my child is smart cause he got a revelashaun that delete is not an option for him cause he will be tested and I know he is gritting his teeth right about now. LOL! Call Child Protective Services!

So they were forever trying to shut Paul up, and guess what, like me, it didn't work. T. D. Jakes described Paul as a mastermind. For real! Wherever he was, wherever they put him, Paul was writing letters about the Kingdom of God. Letters, Epistles, same thing. They aren't listed in any particular order because Paul and others were writing some of them at the same time and they just put them all in there however, so don't let the dates throw you.

## CHEATING

Now I'm going to help you cheat like I always have because of folks from high school like Poo Poo, who took Mischelle's geometry test paper off her desk to get her answers while she was looking over at my paper to get my answers, and when she went to write the answer she had got from me on her paper, IT WAS GONE cause Poo Poo had took her whole test paper and she almost went to the bathroom right there in her seat cause Mrs. Fields was coming up the aisle. And in college, I'm glad Cook knew Mr. Hutt was watching him as he walked pass my desk during an accounting exam and didn't pick up the piece of paper I had written the answers on. I eventually slipped him the piece of paper and he still ain't copy all the answers right and got mad cause I got an A and he got a B. I would not lie on these people. But I'm going to keep on helping you cheat with the rest of the NT outlines because you are going to need them in these last days, since some rather read the outlines than the Bible itself. Ain't nothing changed. Study the book vs. read the outlines. Please do both, is all I'm asking. And I ain't no hypocrite. I cheat too. I got these outlines out of a New Living Translation of the Bible which is a too easy to read version, one that I highly recommend if you want it broken all the way down in terms that are very easy to understand. Check it out at [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com).

The really sad part is some folks will not even read the outlines and will be wondering where everybody went. So do me a favor real busy folks, just skip down to the outline for the book of Revelation right quick, and get a revelashaun!

# ACTS

## **AUTHOR**

Luke

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Between 63 - 70 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Nearly two thousand years ago, a match was struck in Palestine that would eventually ignite the whole world. Soon after Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit descended at Jerusalem, and about three thousand people became followers of Jesus Christ. This marked the birth of the Christian church. The book of Acts chronicles the birth and spread of the church, highlighting the deeds of some of its most influential leaders, such as Peter and Paul. Acts continues the story begun in the Gospel of Luke, showing how the church continues the work that Jesus began. After recounting Peter's sermon and the birth of the church, Acts describes the life of the church in Jerusalem, the spread of the gospel to Samaria, the activities of Peter, and the early persecution of the believers. After the death of James, the focus of the book shifts to the apostle Paul and his missionary work throughout the Gentile world. His three missionary journeys are described in some detail, and the first major council in Jerusalem is recorded as well. Acts concludes with Paul's trip to Rome, where the book abruptly ends.

## **PURPOSE**

To record the birth and growth of the Christian church.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The early days of the church (1:1 – 5:42)
- B. Persecution and expansion (6:1 – 9:31)
- C. The missionary activity of Peter (9:32 – 12:25)
- D. Paul's first missionary journey (13:1 – 14:28)
- E. The meeting in Jerusalem (15:1 - 41)
- F. Paul's second missionary journey (16:1 – 18:22)
- G. Paul's third missionary journey (18:23 – 21:14)
- H. Paul's arrest and trip to Rome (21:15 – 28:31)

# ROMANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 58 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Like a skilled lawyer presenting his case, Paul established a solid framework for understanding the broad scope of the gospel in his letter to the Romans. Of all the epistles of Paul, this is the longest, the most elaborate, and the most systematic in design, reading more like a theological treatise than a personal letter. After a lofty introduction, Paul opened his discourse by discussing humanity's relationship to God. Once he established the basic concept that all human beings are violators of holy law, Paul offered a solution, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus Christ receive forgiveness for sin and gain new life in the Holy Spirit. Paul also examined Israel's place in God's grand scheme of history and discussed the future roles of Israel and the Gentile nations in the Kingdom of God. Returning to his earlier train of thought, Paul discussed some practical applications of redemption through Jesus Christ. He concluded his lofty discourse with heartfelt salutations to several believers in Rome. Paul's epistle to the Roman church provides the Christian church with a systematic understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **PURPOSE**

To present a systematic understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the church at Rome.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction (1:1 – 17)
- B. Humanity's sin and Christ's salvation (1:18 – 5:21)
- C. Victory over sin through the power of Christ (6:1 – 8:39)
- D. God's plan for the Jews (9:1 – 11:36)
- E. Principles of Christian living (12:1 – 15:13)
- F. Concluding remarks (15:14 – 16:27)

# 1 CORINTHIANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 56 A. D., near the end of Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus during his third missionary journey.

## **CONTENT**

Surrounded by corruption and every conceivable sin, the Christians in Corinth felt pressure to adapt to the low standards around them. Many who had already compromised asserted that they were free in Christ, but what did this freedom mean? In order to resolve this confusion, Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church. The letter covers a wide variety of topics, including rival factions, incest among believers, public lawsuits between fellow Christians, abuses of spiritual gifts, and disorderly conduct during church meetings and the Lord's Supper. Paul addressed each of these problems, pointing to Christ as the ultimate solution. Paul also gave answers to some specific questions asked by the Corinthians. Some of these topics include marriage, eating food sacrificed to idols, and the resurrection of Christ and his followers. Throughout the letter, Paul repeatedly emphasized that Jesus' followers should let Christ shape their lives, beliefs, and values so that they would not be shaped by the world around them. First Corinthians provides the Christian church with an actual example of how specific problems were addressed and corrected in the early church.

## **PURPOSE**

To identify problems in the Corinthian church, to offer solutions, and to teach the believers how to live as Christians in a corrupt society.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul's greeting (1:1 – 9)
- B. The problem of divisions (1:10 – 4:21)
- C. The problem of incest (5:1 - 13)
- D. The problem of lawsuits (6:1 - 8)
- E. The problem with sexual immorality (6:9 - 20)
- F. Problems related to marriage (7:1 - 40)
- G. Problems concerning idols (8:1 – 11:1)
- H. Problem concerning worship (11:2 – 14:40)
- I. Thoughts concerning the resurrection (15:1 – 58)
- J. Concluding remarks (16:1 -24)

# 2 CORINTHIANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 57 A. D

## **CONTENT**

Following Christ is a constant struggle. The church at Corinth knew this all too well. Although the believers there were being renewed by the Holy Spirit, they still struggled against the immoral influences of the culture around them. Through personal visits and letters, Paul instructed the Corinthian believers in the faith and addressed several problems there. Most of the members readily received this instruction, but a few false teachers slandered Paul and denied his authority over them. So he wrote this letter to defend his authority and denounce those who were twisting the truth. Paul's critics had attacked his motives, saying that he did not care for the Corinthians and used them only for his own gain. So Paul pointed to evidence that showed how he had always been straightforward with the Corinthians and had worked tirelessly for their good. He also defended himself against charges of incompetence by comparing himself to the false teachers. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to continue following his example, to be holy, generous, and true to Christ.

## **PURPOSE**

To defend his apostolic authority and ministry and to refute the false teachers in Corinth.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul's greetings (1:1 – 11)
- B. A summary of Paul's actions (1:12 – 2:13)
- C. A discourse on Paul's apostolic ministry (2:14 – 6:10)
- D. Paul's personal remarks (6:11 – 7:16)
- E. The collection for the poor in Jerusalem (8:1 – 9:15)
- F. Paul's defense of his apostolic authority (10:1 – 13:10)
- G. Concluding remarks (13:11 - 13)

# GALATIANS

## AUTHOR

Paul

## DATE WRITTEN

About 49 A. D.

## CONTENT

Who, after being set free, would ever willing submit themselves to slavery once again? This was Paul's question to the Galatians, who were giving up their freedom in Christ to serve the law once again. It was clear to the early church that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ achieved salvation for all who believed, but how would the law of Moses now relate to them? Should Christians continue observing the law or not? The Galatian church was divided over this question. Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians to settle this dispute. He opened his letter with a very short introduction and then cut right to the heart of the matter: If believers are justified by grace through Christ, why were many Galatians insisting upon other requirements? Paul showed how Abraham, who had lived more than four hundred years prior to the giving of the law, was justified by his faith, not his deeds. Likewise, the Galatians should see themselves as free from the law, free, that is, to serve Christ and be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

## PURPOSE

To refute those who insisted that Christians must obey the law of Moses and to remind Christians of their freedom in Christ.

## OUTLINE

- A. Paul's defense of himself and the gospel (1:1 – 2:21)
- B. Freedom from the curse of the law (3:1 - 24)
- C. The superiority of the gospel over the law (3:25 – 4:31)
- D. The freedom of the Christian (5:1 -26)
- E. Practical exhortations (6:1 - 18)

# EPHESIANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 61 A. D., during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

## **CONTENT**

Every once in a while, God grants his people a rare glimpse of their place in the grand scheme of history, a brief moment when they can assess who they are, where they have come from, and where they are going. Paul's letter to the Ephesians provides the church with just such a vision of itself. This letter, which was possibly intended to be circulated among several churches, was written while Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Paul began his lofty message with an overview of God's work in eternity past, where God worked out his plans for the world. Paul then moved to the present, where God is saving and transforming those who believe in Christ. Paul concluded this section with a vision of the future, where all evil will be overcome. He pointed out that in the present, however, we will continue to have conflicts, because our battle is with the forces of evil. Paul ended the letter with directives for some practical matters of the Christian life, such as family life and work. The letter to the Ephesians provides the Christian church with a grand vision of itself, toward which it can continually grow.

## **PURPOSE**

To strengthen believers by explaining the nature and purpose of the church, the body of Christ.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The plan of God and the believer's salvation (1:1 – 2:22)
- B. The mystery of the gospel (3:1 - 21)
- C. The Christian's life in the world (4:1 – 5:20)
- D. The Christian's relationships (5:21 – 6:9)
- E. The Christian's battle with evil (6:10 - 24)

# PHILIPPIANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 61 A. D., during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

## **CONTENT**

Contentment. Paul had learned the secret of this attitude, and he revealed it to the Philippians as well. While under house arrest, Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians to thank some dear friends who had sent him money. In this letter he tells them about a joy that does not depend upon external circumstances, because it is rooted in Jesus Christ, who gives it freely. Paul began by expressing his thanks to the Philippians. After describing some problems he was facing in Rome, Paul revealed his uncertainty over his future, where he would be executed or released. Despite his uncertainty, however, Paul remained confident in the face of death, for he trusted in Christ. Paul then painted a picture of Christ's humility and urged the Philippians to follow this example. Paul digressed for a bit and warned his readers against relying upon external qualifications for their faith. After a few personal comments, Paul closed his letter by thanking the Philippians again for their generosity.

## **PURPOSE**

To thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him and to encourage them by describing the contentment he has found in Jesus Christ alone.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul and the problems at Rome (1:1 – 30)
- B. The example of Christ's humility (2:1 - 30)
- C. Warnings and exhortations to Christian living (3:1 – 21)
- D. The peace of God and God's provisions for the believer (4:1 – 23)

# COLOSSIANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 61 A. D., during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

## **CONTENT**

Who is Jesus? From the earliest days of Christianity, there has never been a shortage of alternative answers and theories regarding this question. Paul's letter to the Colossians addressed this question as well, as he combated pagan ideas that were creeping into the church. Paul had never visited the church at Colosse, but he was concerned about them and warned them against those who were promoting theories about Jesus that mixed pagan and scriptural ideas. These false teachers had taken elements of astrology, magic, and Judaism and produced a doctrine that regarded Jesus merely as an angelic being. To correct this view, Paul emphasized the deity of Christ and listed several titles of Jesus that highlight his uniqueness. Some of these titles included "the visible image of the invisible God," "the one through whom God created everything," "the head of the church," and "the first of all who will rise from the dead." Then Paul instructed his readers in the new life they should lead in Christ. After several personal greetings, Paul concluded the letter.

## **PURPOSE**

To combat false doctrines about Jesus Christ and to show the sufficiency of Jesus Christ for the Colossians.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul's opening prayer (1:1 – 14)
- B. The glory of Christ (1:15 – 2:3)
- C. Warnings against false beliefs (2:4 - 23)
- D. Instructions for Christian living (3:1 – 4:1)
- E. Exhortations to prayer and concluding remarks (4:2 – 18)

# 1 THESSALONIANS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 51 A. D., one of Paul's earliest letters.

## **CONTENT**

Like a father instructing his growing children, Paul urged the Thessalonians to lead lives worthy of Christ's kingdom, which would soon be established. This is one of Paul's first epistles, and he wrote it shortly after the church was founded at Thessalonica (2:17). Paul opened the letter by commending the Thessalonians for their faith and for their eagerness to spread the gospel throughout their region. He encouraged them to remain strong, despite persecution for the sake of the gospel. After expressing his longing to see them, Paul also guided the church in a few practical matters, addressing cases of adultery, revelry, disrespect, and obstruction of the Holy Spirit's work. Paul corrected these believers while affirming his love for them. Some believers whose relatives had died needed comfort and reassurance that their relatives would also be included in the kingdom, although they had died before Christ's return. Paul's discussion about Christ's return also encouraged the believers to live in constant hope.

## **PURPOSE**

To encourage the Thessalonian believers in their faith and assure them of Christ's return.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul's heartfelt thanks for the Thessalonians (1:1 – 10)
- B. Paul's personal defense (2:1 -16)
- C. Description of events since leaving Thessalonica (2:17 – 3:13)
- D. Exhortation to a godly life (4:1 - 12)
- E. The return of Christ (4:13 – 5:11)
- F. Final admonitions (5:12 – 28)

## 2 THESSALONIANS

### **AUTHOR**

Paul

### **DATE WRITTEN**

About 51 or 52 A. D., a few months after 1 Thessalonians.

### **CONTENT**

Good communication is essential for understanding each other's thoughts. Often the message we receive is not the message the other person intended to send. This is what happened with Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. In his first letter, Paul had explained that Christ could return at any moment, but apparently some believers misunderstood this to mean that they could stop working and simply wait for Christ to come back. Paul meant to encourage them, not give them a detailed schedule for the future. So he wrote 2 Thessalonians to correct this misunderstanding. Paul began his second letter by encouraging those who were still enduring persecution for their faith. Moving quickly to the heart of the matter, Paul explained that no one knows the exact time of Christ's return, only that he will return. He explained that this great day of judgment will not take them by surprise but will be preceded by a series of recognizable events. Therefore, in the light of Christ's sure return, Christians should lead lives that are above reproach.

### **PURPOSE**

To clear up confusion about the day of Christ's return.

### **OUTLINE**

- A. Encouragement from the promised return of Christ (1:1 – 12)
- B. The events before Christ's return (2:1 -12)
- C. Further instructions and admonitions (2:13 – 3:5)
- D. Christian behavior and final greetings (3:6 - 18)

# 1 TIMOTHY

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 64 A. D., probably just prior to Paul's final imprisonment in Rome.

## **CONTENT**

Timothy is the first second-generation Christian leader mentioned in the NT. He became Paul's protégé and a leader in the Ephesian church. As a young minister, Timothy faced all sorts of pressures, conflicts, and challenges from the church and from the surrounding culture. Paul sent this personal letter to counsel and encourage Timothy. Paul spent the final years of his life in prison (see Acts 25-28), but many scholars believe he enjoyed a period of freedom between A. D. 62 and 64, before he was imprisoned again and executed. He probably wrote this letter during his period of freedom. In his letter, Paul warned against false teachers and encouraged Timothy to remain strong in the faith. Paul also gave several directives for worship and for the ordination of church officers. The letter tends to be fairly personal, but many of its instructions are still helpful for church leaders today.

## **PURPOSE**

To encourage and instruct Timothy, a young church leader.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Warnings about false doctrine (1:1 – 20)
- B. Instructions regarding prayer (2:1 -15)
- C. Instructions concerning the ordination of elders and deacons (3:1 - 16)
- D. Exhortations and ministry (4:1 – 5:25)
- E. The Christian ministry and charge to Timothy (6:1 – 21)

## 2 TIMOTHY

### **AUTHOR**

Paul

### **DATE WRITTEN**

About 66 or 67 A. D., from prison in Rome, shortly before his execution by the emperor.

### **CONTENT**

We tend to pay special attention to the words of a person who is very near death, because we believe that his or her words will contain important pieces of wisdom, reflection, and advice. Paul's second letter to Timothy expresses Paul's final thoughts and reflections shortly before his death. This letter is very personal and is probably the last letter Paul ever wrote. It expresses Paul's deepest feelings and his assurance that, although his earthly life might end soon, God had eternal life waiting for him in heaven (1:10-12). Paul also reflected upon the faithfulness of God and exhorted Timothy to remain faithful, although the days were coming when Christians would be persecuted and some would depart from the truth.

### **PURPOSE**

To give final instructions and encouragement to Timothy, a young church leader.

### **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul's thanksgiving for Timothy (1:1 – 5)
- B. Paul's charge to Timothy (1:6 – 2:2)
- C. Description of a faithful servant (2:3 - 26)
- D. The coming rebellion against God (3:1 - 17)
- E. Paul's final words (4:1 - 22)

# TITUS

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 64 A. D., the same time 1 Timothy was written.

## **CONTENT**

Like Timothy, Titus was one of Paul's trusted assistants who was commissioned to help lead a church. Paul wrote a letter to instruct Titus in his pastoral duties on the island of Crete. Paul advised Titus regarding the ordination of elders and the teachings of the basic doctrines of the faith. He went into some detail regarding the qualifications for the office of elder, and he gave instructions for others in the church as well. Paul directed Titus to encourage the people to be submissive to the governing authorities whenever possible. Paul also addressed problems that often faced church leaders and instructed Titus how to solve them.

## **PURPOSE**

To instruct Titus in his duties as a leader of the church in Crete.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Personal greeting (1:1 – 4)
- B. Instructions concerning the ordination of elders (1:5 – 16)
- C. General remarks for church members (2:1 - 15)
- D. Exhortation to Christian living (3:1 - 15)

# PHILEMON

## **AUTHOR**

Paul

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 61 A. D., during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

## **CONTENT**

Forgiveness. Christians have all received forgiveness from God, and so we should forgive others as well. That is why Paul wrote to Philemon, a believer in the church at Colosse. Philemon owned a slave named Onesimus, who later fled from his master. Paul met up with Onesimus after he had fled, and Onesimus became a Christian. Paul then sent Onesimus back to his owner with a letter, asking Philemon to be forgiving and to treat Onesimus like a brother in Christ. It is very likely that this letter was sent along with Paul's letter to the Colossians.

## **PURPOSE**

To convince Philemon to forgive his runaway slave and accept him as a brother in Christ.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Paul's greetings to Philemon (1:1 – 3)
- B. Paul's praise of Philemon (1:4 – 7)
- C. Paul's plea for Onesimus (1:8 - 21)
- D. Concluding remarks(1:22 - 25)

# HEBREWS

## **AUTHOR**

Uncertain; some have suggested Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Priscilla, Luke and others

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Probably a few years before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem around 70 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Have you ever second-guessed yourself on a major decision and wondered if you have made a big mistake? The letter to the Hebrews deals with this concern among some Jewish Christians. Apparently, after some pressure and persecution, these believers were having second thoughts about their decision to leave Judaism to become Christians. So this letter shows how Christianity is superior to Judaism. In every way, Christ is shown to be better. As God, he is superior to angels, to Moses, and to the Old Testament priests. As a man, Jesus Christ is able to identify with our struggles. Jesus Christ sealed a new covenant that is far superior to the old covenant of Judaism. So the author encouraged the believers to move beyond questions about the basics of the faith and to follow the example of the many faithful men and women of the past, who followed God in the midst of persecution. The author concluded the letter with some personal greetings and thoughts.

## **PURPOSE**

To present Christianity as superior to Judaism and to show the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's work.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The superiority of Christ (1:1 – 3:19)
- B. The better life of the believer (4:1 – 16)
- C. Christ's superior priestly work (5:1 – 8:13)
- D. The better covenant (9:1 – 10:39)
- E. Great believers of old (11:1 – 40)
- F. Practical instructions for believers (12:1 – 13:19)
- G. Concluding words (13:20 -25)

# JAMES

## **AUTHOR**

James, the half brother of Jesus, a leader in the Jerusalem church.

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Probably about 45 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Actions speak louder than words. This old adage comes through loud and clear in the book of James. This book attacks the notion that becoming a Christian is simply a matter of assenting to a few spiritual truths without experiencing any real change in behavior or thinking. James was a leader in the church at Jerusalem, and so this book has a very Jewish flavor. It contains many short, proverbial sayings and resembles the teachings of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount. James addressed several matters in which Christian behavior should reflect Christian faith. He discussed pride, discrimination, greed, lust, hypocrisy, worldliness, and slander. James used several analogies to show how true faith must evidence itself in good works. He compared it to a tree bearing only the kind of fruit that belongs to it. Because of the book's emphasis on good works, it is a very practical book regarding the Christian life.

## **PURPOSE**

To correct the false belief that a person can have faith without a change of behavior and to give practical instruction regarding the Christian life.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The true life of faith (1:1 – 27)
- B. The social implications of faith (2:1 - 13)
- C. Faith and works (2:14 - 26)
- D. Controlling the tongue (3:1 - 18)
- E. Practical exhortations (4:1 - 17)
- F. The rich rebuked (5:1 - 6)
- G. Concluding exhortations (5:7 - 20)

# 1 PETER

## **AUTHOR**

Peter

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 63 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Abuse and persecution were par for the course for many who followed Christ in the first century. In order to comfort and encourage persecuted believers in Asia Minor, the apostle Peter wrote them a letter near the end of his life. The letter was addressed to believers in five different regions of Asia Minor, so the letter was probably routed among them. Peter opened his letter by reminding his readers of their precious hope in Jesus Christ. This hope far outweighs any sufferings they might endure for their faith. In light of this hope, Peter urged all believers; husbands and wives, masters and slaves, elders and lay people, to live holy lives among unbelievers, thereby giving testimony to Jesus Christ. He comforted them regarding the abuse they had endured, noting that Jesus Christ also suffered. But Peter also prepared them for even harder times. These sufferings would perfect the believers' faith and purify their souls.

## **PURPOSE**

To offer encouragement to suffering Christians.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The glory of salvation in Christ (1:1 – 25)
- B. Christian obedience (2:1 - 10)
- C. Suffering and the example of Christ (2:11 - 25)
- D. Christian living at home and in the world (3:1 - 17)
- E. Suffering and the example of Christ (3:18 – 4:19)
- F. Christian service and concluding words (5:1 - 14)

## 2 PETER

### **AUTHOR**

Peter

### **DATE WRITTEN**

About 67 A. D., shortly before his execution

### **CONTENT**

Like a road sign warning of danger ahead, Peter's second letter, written shortly before his death, alerts readers to the coming return of the Lord. In light of the Lord's imminent return, Peter urged his readers to live lives that would glorify God. He also cautioned them to watch out for false teachers, who would distort the gospel. These evil workers will receive their punishment when the Lord returns. Peter instructed his readers to pay no attention to scoffers who cast doubt into the minds of believers regarding the return of the Lord. He assured them that the Lord will indeed return and establish a new heaven and a new earth. The letter closes with a final comment about Paul's letters, noting that they are difficult to understand. Peter warned his readers against those who might twist Paul's words to justify their own lawless actions, and he encouraged them to continually grow in their knowledge of Jesus Christ.

### **PURPOSE**

To warn believers against false teachers and to encourage them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

### **OUTLINE**

- A. Strategy for spiritual growth (1:1 – 21)
- B. Warnings against false teachers (2:1 – 22)
- C. Exhortations concerning the return of the Lord (3:1 – 18)

# 1 JOHN

## **AUTHOR**

John the apostle

## **DATE WRITTEN**

Probably between 85 - 90 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

For the most part, seeing is believing. Learning something by word of mouth leaves room for misunderstanding, but witnessing an event firsthand gives a person's testimony special significance. John's first letter to the church makes it clear that he had indeed witnessed Jesus Christ with his own two eyes and that he really knew Jesus. This first epistle was prompted by a heretical faction that had developed within the church. The faction had distorted the apostles' teachings about the person of Christ, denying that Jesus Christ had actually come in the flesh. In order to counter these false assertions, John reaffirmed that he and the other apostles had actually seen and touched Jesus Christ. He exhorted his readers to do several things: to walk in the light with God and fellow Christians; to confess their sins; to love God and others; to purify themselves from worldly lusts; to follow the Spirit of truth; and to esteem Jesus Christ as God. John stressed the importance of fellowship in order to safeguard against further division and heresy.

## **PURPOSE**

To reaffirm Jesus Christ's humanity and divinity and to instruct believers in their Christian walk.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. The fellowship of believers with God (1:1 – 10)
- B. The new command to love (2:1 – 17)
- C. Warnings against the Antichrist and evil (2:18 – 29)
- D. Christian behavior (3:1 – 24)
- E. False teachers (4:1 – 6)
- F. The love of God (4:7 – 21)
- G. The victory of faith (5:1 – 21)

## 2 JOHN

### **AUTHOR**

John the apostle

### **DATE WRITTEN**

About 90 A. D., about the same time as 1 John

### **CONTENT**

John wrote this short letter to “the chosen lady and her children,” probably meaning a church and its members. It was written to encourage true Christian love and to warn against deceivers who might deny that Jesus Christ was truly human. John directed his readers to hold to the teachings of Jesus Christ and cautioned against hosting those who did not hold to these teachings. John closed his letter by telling them that he wished to see them soon.

### **PURPOSE**

To emphasize truth and love among believers and to warn against false teachers.

### **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction (1:1 – 3)
- B. The life of love (1:4 – 6)
- C. Rejecting the antichrist (1:7 – 11)
- D. Closing remarks (1:12 – 13)

# 3 JOHN

## **AUTHOR**

John the apostle

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 90 A. D., about the same time as 2 John

## **CONTENT**

This short letter is a personal note from the apostle John to his friend Gaius. Apparently, Gaius regularly welcomed traveling Christian workers into his home. John commended Gaius for his deeds and encouraged him to continue his ministry. John also denounced the actions of Diotrephes, who refused to acknowledge the authority of John and his associates, but he commended Demetrius. John closed the letter by telling Gaius that he wanted to see him face to face.

## **PURPOSE**

To commend Gaius for his hospitality and to denounce the actions of Diotrephes.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction (1:1 – 4)
- B. Christian hospitality (1:5 - 8)
- C. The evil work of Diotrephes (1:9 – 11)
- D. The good work of Demetrius (1:12)
- E. Closing remarks (1:13 – 15)

# JUDE

## **AUTHOR**

Jude, the half brother of Jesus

## **DATE WRITTEN**

About 65 A. D.

## **CONTENT**

Why do lies tickle our ears so much more than the truth? Often we allow false information to be spread among us because it is interesting, and we are slow to put an end to it. Jude was concerned about this same problem as he wrote this letter. We do not know where he sent his letter, but the message he was sending is very clear: Christians must stand firm against false teachers and their false doctrines. Jude warned his readers that intruders had slipped in among them and spread false teachings. He condemned these teachers and compared their fate to that of Cain, Balaam, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He described them as lawless, lustful malcontents who scheme for their own gain. Jude challenged his readers to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ and to help others who were wavering in their faith.

## **PURPOSE**

To warn believers against false teachers and to encourage believers to remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

## **OUTLINE**

- A. Introduction (1:1 – 2)
- B. Warnings concerning false teachers (1:3 -7)
- C. The evil lives of false teachers (1:8 – 19)
- D. Exhortation to Christians (1:20 – 23)
- E. Doxology (1:24 – 25)

# REVELATION

## AUTHOR

John the apostle

## DATE WRITTEN

About 95 A. D., from the island of Patmos

## CONTENT

How could Christians of the first century remain faithful to their Lord when faced with fierce persecution and even death? The answer is simple: hope. Though the world around them was hostile and appeared to be winning the battle, Christians of the first century could stand firm because they knew the end of the story: Jesus Christ and his saints would be victorious in the end. This is the message of the book of Revelation. The first three chapters of the book are written as letters to various churches in Asia Minor, warning them against their specific shortcomings. The rest of the book recounts a fantastic vision involving bizarre creatures, divine beings, symbolic signs and numbers, and various plagues and curses. The meaning of this vision is related to the final judgment. At God's appointed time, Jesus Christ will come in glory and reveal himself to the entire world as the sovereign Lord. Those who love him will be glad, but those who do not love him will be afraid, for they will be allied with Satan in a battle doomed to failure. Ultimately, Jesus Christ will defeat them and usher in his eternal kingdom. The book of Revelation provides a fitting end to the Bible's grand story about God and humanity.

## PURPOSE

To encourage believers to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and to give them hope that they will ultimately be victorious.

## OUTLINE

- A. The opening vision (1:1 – 20)
- B. The seven letters to the churches (2:1 – 3:22)
- C. The vision of God and the Lamb (4:1 – 5:14)
- D. The seven seals of judgment (6:1 – 8:5)
- E. The seven trumpets of judgment (8:6 – 11:19)
- F. Visions of earthly and heavenly conflict (12:1 – 14:20)
- G. The seven bowls of judgment (15:1 – 16:21)
- H. The judgment of Babylon (17:1 – 19:21)
- I. The end of the age and the age to come (20:1 – 22:21)

**SEE YALL IN THE RAPTURE!!!**

*Love, Sonnie*