

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE



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ORIGIN

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Simply put, the Bible is a collection of literature physically written by humans and inspired by God over centuries. These writings come from different areas of the ancient world, over different periods of time, written by different people.

From Language to Language

Since these ancient texts were written in other languages, they were translated for other tongues.

- Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic texts (Old Testament) were translated into Greek (known as the Septuagint).
- The Septuagint was translated into English for the Old Testament and the New Testament was written in Greek, then translated into English.

COMPOSITION

WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE

The Bible is split into two main sections:

Old Testament (Hebrew & Aramaic) and **New Testament** (Greek)



COMPOSITION

WHAT'S IN THE BIBLE

Each section of the Bible contains different types of literature. A breakdown of major literature types are given here by book. We will investigate and study these literature styles later in the class.

OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS-DEUTERONOMY **NARRATIVE/LAW**
JOSHUA-ESTHER **NARRATIVE**
JOB-SONG OF SONGS **WISDOM**
ISAIAH-MALACHI **PROPHECY**

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW-ACTS **NARRATIVE**
ROMANS-JUDE **LETTERS/PROS DISCOURSE**
REVELATION **PROPHECY**

PURPOSE

WHAT IS THE BIBLE ABOUT?

Some might say the Bible is an instruction manual or a guidebook for our lives. Others might say it is God's letter to us about what He wants us to know. Still others would say it is a story to meditate on every day. While all of these might be true, these purposes cannot be applied to every part of the Bible. The Bible contains many different literary styles and with each of them come a different purpose for writing.

OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS 3 - SEED OF WOMAN
GENESIS 12- SEED OF ABRAHAM

The Old Testament follows Israel's history from Abraham to after their exile in Babylon. While following this story, the authors often highlight another more cosmic story, one that points to and is fulfilled in Jesus.

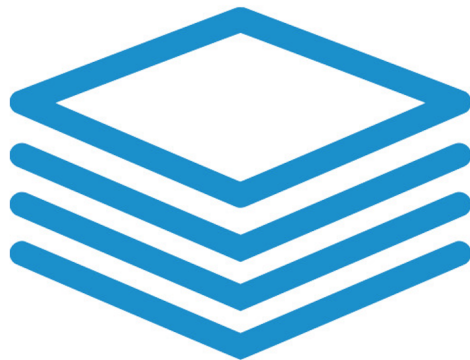
NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW-JOHN: JESUS' MINISTRY
ACTS: APOSTLES AND EARLY CHURCH
ROMANS-REVELATION: LETTERS FOR INSTRUCTION

The New Testament picks up with Jesus' story and explains through narrative why he is the Savior. Then the apostles go around preaching about this Jesus and about the Holy Spirit. The rest of the Bible is filled with apostles writing letters to little home churches and groups of struggling Christians about living for Jesus.

UNIT 2

TYPES OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE



Narrative

The narrative of the Bible can seem quite complicated and confusing but it can be broken down into two storylines:

- Story of Israel
 - Follows the story of Abraham's family and how they became the nation of Israel.
- Story of the Messiah
 - The Savior is prophesied about and comes through the nation of Israel. His ministry is told in the Gospels and continues today.

Story of Israel

- Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob
 - Jacob has 12 sons that become twelve tribes. These tribes are called the nation of **Israel**
- Joseph

In Egypt

- Moses
 - Moses leads the nation of Israel out of Egypt and are headed to Canaan (the promised land). They get stuck in the wilderness.
 -

Promised Land

- Joshua leads people into promised lands. Other nations are there so they drive them out but are unsuccessful in doing so completely.

Kingship

- Samuel anoints Saul as king. After his failure, David takes over, then his son Solomon reigns in his place.

Split Kingdom

- The rest of the story is taken up by the split kingdom of Israel (Israel-North Judah-South). Because of kingship failure, Israel is taken over by Assyria, Judah is taken over by Babylon. Israel is in EXILE.

Post- Exile

- Some Jews come back to rebuild the temple while others stay in the land they are.

Story of Messiah

- Genesis 3:21- "seed of woman" who will crush head of snake.
 - This is the first prophecy of many. Jesus the Messiah was prophesied about throughout Israel's story as one who would restore the people. But he would come to save more than Israel.
- Deuteronomy 18:18
- Isaiah 53
- Daniel 7

Jesus was prophesied as one who would bring restoration to Israel and free them from oppressors. Though this was the interpretation of many, these prophecies meant something more. Jesus would eventually save the world from sin.

In the New Testament, Jesus' story is told mostly from a ministry perspective. He did many miracles, healed the sick, and taught. Eventually he died for everyone's sin and was resurrected on the third day. The rest of the biblical narrative concludes mostly in Acts, with followers of Jesus establishing churches and spreading the Good News that Jesus saves. The end of Revelation tells of a future narrative where evil is defeated once and for all, because of Jesus.

Prophecy

It is often interpreted that prophecy is a prediction of the future and predicts some disaster upon certain people. While that can be true, it is not an inclusive statement of all prophecies. The basic idea of a prophecy is that it is a **message from God**. Those who give these messages are called **prophets**.

Roles of Prophets:

- Warn Israel of their sin
- Encourage Repentance
- Foretell future destruction and restoration
- Remind Israel of past deliverance
- "Watchman" of Israel
 - This means they "watch" for Israel's sins and try to get the leaders and priests to turn from evil and follow the covenant.
- Give messages to other nations
- Pronounce God's Judgment
- Pronounce God's mercy and love
- Speak of the coming Messiah

Most prophecy can be confusing because of the language used and the depictions they create. Prophets often used vivid imagery and metaphors as a form of poetry to get their message across. They may find more than one way to say the same thing and some text may be lost with a modern viewpoint. Prophecies were a message from God and though the messages were different, the reality was the same for them all: Listen and Learn.

List of Prophetic books:

- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets.
- According to Jesus, and many Jews alike, the Prophets included Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets.

Poetry

Poetry takes many forms in the Bible and is used to express God's words in different ways and explore the human condition.

The following books contain poetry:

- Job- Human Suffering
- Psalms- variety of poems exploring many avenues of humanity and feelings
- Proverbs- Righteous vs Wicked
- Ecclesiastes- Explores meaning of life
- Song of Solomon- Love
- Lamentations- Sorrow

Prose Discourse

From Romans-Jude, most of the New Testament is made up of literature called Prose Discourse. These texts were letters written by apostles to early Jesus followers and churches that were scattered across many regions. When we read these letters, we are reading someone else's mail and it is often helpful to remember this contextual feature. These texts often give instruction to their audience and expand upon teachings that were given in person by the apostles.

Examples:

Acts 18- Paul visits Corinth

Acts 19- Paul in Ephesus

Acts 16 Paul meets Timothy

Paul writes 1 & 2 Corinthians

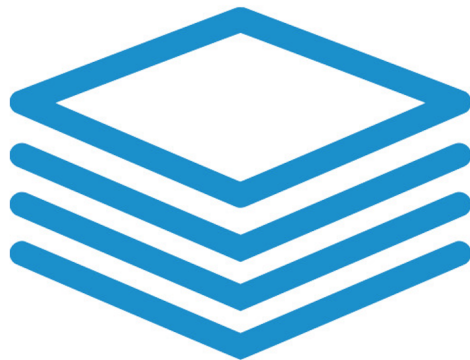
Paul writes Ephesians

Paul writes to him in 1/2 Timothy

These letters are written to open our eyes to what following Jesus is all about. These letters are written for both Jews and Gentiles alike and the bottom line is that Jesus is the Messiah and he is worth following with everything we have and everything we are.

UNIT 3

THE BIBLICAL STORY



Genesis-Deuteronomy

The Torah

Genesis -Deuteronomy, the first five books of the Bible is known as the Pentateuch or the Torah in Jewish tradition. This collection tells the origin story of Israel while giving the instructions for them to live by.

- **Genesis** begins with the story of creation and the flood. It then focuses on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (who has 12 sons that become the 12 tribes of Israel) as the founders of the nation of Israel.
- **Exodus** tells the story of Israel enslaved in Egypt and how God set them free and led them into the wilderness. They come to Mt. Sinai where God gives them instructions for the tabernacle.
- **Leviticus** and Numbers take place in the wilderness. Leviticus gives instructions as to how ritual sacrifices and holy days are to take place.
- **Numbers** gives some narrative of a rebellious nation who refuses to listen and trust Yahweh. God tests them and they fail repeatedly.
- **Deuteronomy** is like a big sermon given by Moses in a single day. The people are outside Canaan waiting to enter the land God promised them. Moses reminds them of God's laws and warns them of the blessings that follow from listening and the curses that result from rebellion.

Joshua-Chronicles

Story of Israel

Promised Land

- Joshua leads people into promised lands. Other nations are there so they drive them out but are unsuccessful in doing so completely.

Kingship

- Samuel anoints Saul as king. After his failure, David takes over, then his son Solomon reigns in his place.

Split Kingdom

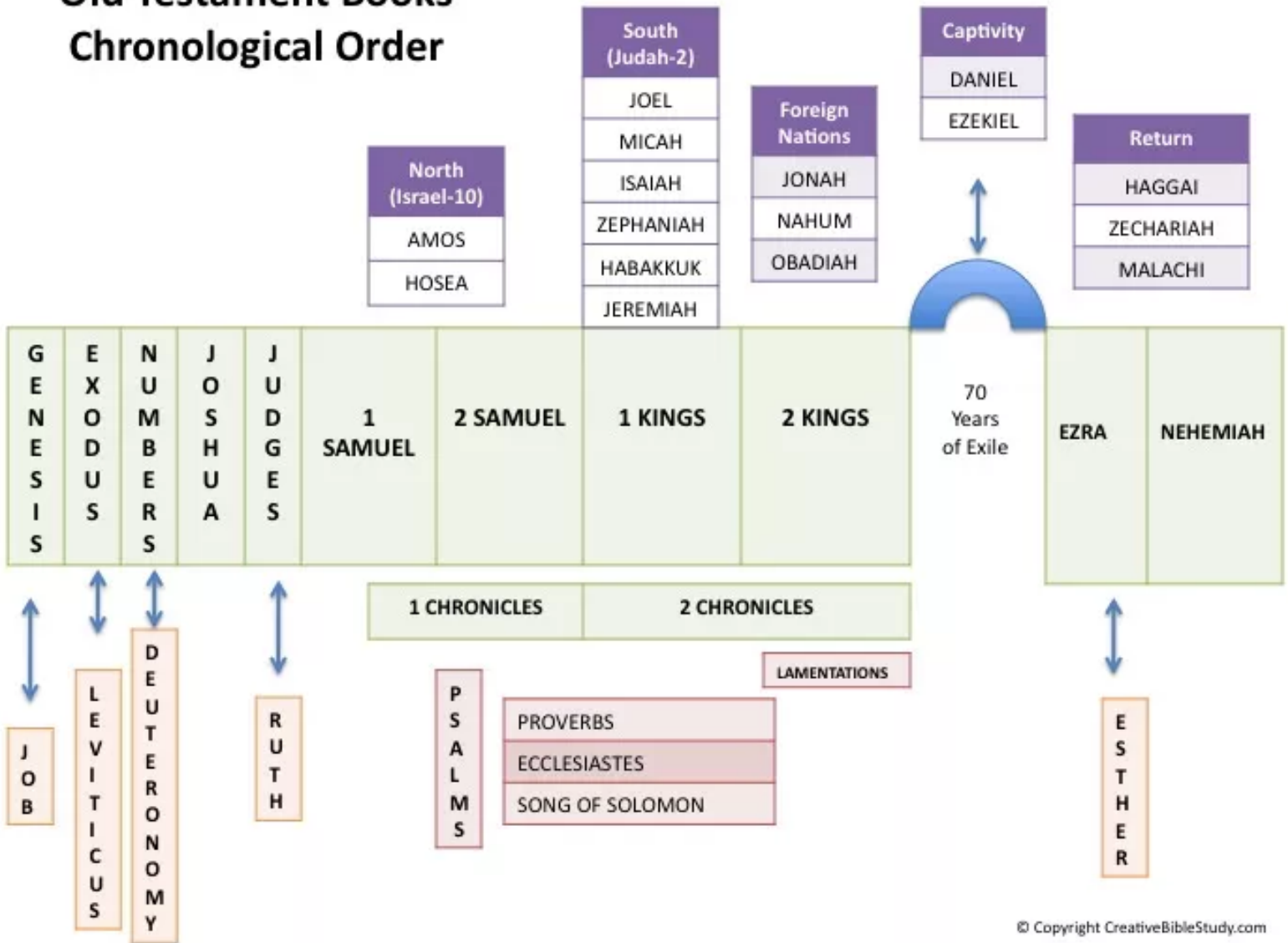
- The rest of the story is taken up by the split kingdom of Israel (Israel-North Judah-South). Because of kingship failure, Israel is taken over by Assyria, Judah is taken over by Babylon. Israel is in EXILE.

Post- Exile

- Some Jews come back to rebuild the temple while others stay in the land they were taken captive to.

Here is a simple chart to understand where books of the Bible fit in Israel's story

Old Testament Books Chronological Order



Call of Abraham -> Israel goes to Egypt -> Rescued out of Egypt-> In Wilderness -> Enter Promised Land -> Kings Fail -> Assyria/Babylon Destroy -> Exile-> Return to Jerusalem

The Prophets

Isaiah- Prophet who pronounces judgment on Israel and the hope of a coming Messiah.

Jeremiah- Prophet who focuses heavily on judgment for Jerusalem and the exile to follow.

Ezekiel- A prophet who is in exile in Babylon. He sees into God's throne room and pronounces judgment while also giving hope for a restored creation and new temple.

Daniel- Has strange dreams about the future and is given their interpretation as future kingdoms that will come. The point is that earthly rulers can and will be violent and oppressive but God will rule over all.

The Twelve- A scroll of prophecies from 12 different prophets (also known as minor prophets) each with its own audience and meaning. Some were for Israel's leaders and a call for the people to repent, others contain dreams and point out Israel's sin and ultimate redemption, and a few were meant for other nations.

The Prophet's Audience

Prophets of Israel

Amos
Hosea

Prophets of Judah

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Joel
Micah
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Ezekiel (exiles in Babylon)
Daniel (exiles in Babylon)
Haggai (returned)
Zechariah (returned)
Malachi (returned)

Prophets to Other Nations

Jonah
Nahum
Obadiah

Wisdom

Wisdom literature in the Hebrew tradition is meant for rereading and meditation over a lifetime. These writings give us truth about a world that can sometimes make no sense and each scroll helps to unveil the human condition, human suffering, and truth in a world full of deceit and destruction.

- Job- Human Suffering
- Psalms- variety of poems exploring many avenues of humanity and feelings
- Proverbs- Righteous vs Wicked
- Ecclesiastes- Explores meaning of life
- Song of Solomon- Love
- Lamentations- Sorrow

These writings play a role in Israel's story by examining in a poetic form the suffering of humans, the righteous and the wicked, and the meaning of life. Through wisdom and truth the poets explore Israel's story through the lens of those who have experience and offer wisdom on living for Yahweh.

Gospels

Gospel means “good news”. The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John introduce the Messiah, Jesus and tell the story of his ministry and share the “good news” about Jesus and the kingdom of God.

- Birth
- Temptation
- Ministry
 - Teachings
 - Miracles
 - Healings
- Death
- Burial
- Resurrection
- Ascension

Acts

The narrative of Acts tells a couple of different stories but mainly the story of the early church and how the work of the Spirit spread the good news about Jesus. The last half of Acts tells the story of Paul's missions to the Gentile world.

Acts 1-9

- Apostles in Jerusalem

Acts 10-12

- Good News to the Gentiles

Acts 13-28

- Paul's 1st journey
- Paul's 2nd journey
- Paul's 3rd journey
- Paul's 4th journey

Letters

These letters help give us insight into the start of the local church. They provide problems, solutions, and wisdom for those gathering as a church and those living for Jesus.

Romans- Jews in Roman cities	Hebrews- Jews
1/2 Corinthians- church at Corinth	James- Scattered Jews
Galatians- Galatia	1/2 Peter- Scattered Christians
Ephesians- Ephesus	1/2/3 John- written by John to little house churches
Philippians- Philippi	Jude- to followers of Jesus
Colossians- Colossae	Revelation- to churches in Asia and all followers
1/2 Thessalonians- Thessalonica	
1/2 Timothy- Young pastor, Timothy	
Titus- young pastor, Titus	
Philemon- brother in Christ	

Revelation

Revelation is one of the most mis-interpreted books in Scripture and it does not need to be. The full title is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”. Simply put, Revelation is a letter written to followers of Jesus that reveals who Jesus is and what he is all about in a poetic form.

Revelation completes the biblical story by providing us with the battle between good and evil we are all aware of. This age-long war will end one day with Jesus as the slain victor and evil being done away for all time. A new heaven and earth will appear and those who followed Jesus will enter this place. Those who rejected Jesus will be rejected from entering. The Bible started with a garden and the Bible ends with a garden-city that will be inherited by those who received salvation.

