

A SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Books of Law

GENESIS	The book of beginnings or origin telling the story of the creation, the flood, and the beginnings of God's chosen people through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
EXODUS	The departure of the Israelites from Egypt, the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, and the journeys in the wilderness.
LEVITICUS	The book of the Levites, the priests, mostly concerned with the laws and rules of worship the priests were expected to follow.
NUMBERS	Contains two accounts of censuses of the Hebrews, a history of the wilderness wanderings, and the appointment of Joshua as Moses' successor.
DEUTERONOMY	The law of Moses set down for the second time, mainly for the non-priests. Continues the history begun in Numbers.

The Books of History

JOSHUA	The history of the Israelites' conquest of Canaan, under the leadership of Joshua, the crossing of the Jordan River, capture of Jericho, driving out the Canaanites, and dividing the land among the twelve tribes of Israel.
JUDGES	The leaders (judges) who ruled Israel after the death of Joshua. The pattern of unfaithfulness, persecution, repentance, prosperity, unfaithfulness, etc. occurs several times in this period.
RUTH	A Moabite widow, in the days of the Judges, left her people to serve her mother-in-law and God. She married a Jew and became an ancestor of David (and, thus, of Jesus).
I & 2 SAMUEL	The history of Israel during the judgeship of Samuel, the reign of the first king of Israel, Saul, and the reign of David, the second king of Israel.
I & 2 KINGS	A history of the reign of Solomon, the building of the temple, Israel's kingdom at its peak, the divided kingdom, and the eventual destruction of each part.
I & 2 CHRONICLES	More history of the kings, mostly devoted to the kings of Judah.
EZRA and NEHEMIAH	The return of the Jews from exile to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple and restore the worship of God.
ESTHER	A Jewish maiden in captivity becomes the queen of Persia and saves her people.

The Books of Poetry

JOB	A long narrative in the form of a poem describing the suffering of Job and the ways of God, which are beyond human reasoning.
PSALMS	150 poems, mostly by David, dealing with matters of religion, history, and daily living.
PROVERBS	A collection of wise sayings, mostly written by Solomon, concerning life and behavior, intended for the moral instruction and guidance of the people of Israel.

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ECCLESIASTES More writings of Solomon, pointing out the vanity of following the ways of the world.

SONG OF SONGS A series of poems, probably written by Solomon, about two lovers, which could be symbolic of God's love for his people.

Major Prophets

ISAIAH Prophecies concerning the Babylonian captivity, the restoration of Israel, and many prophecies concerning the Messiah.

JEREMIAH Known as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah mainly predicts doom, but he does express hope for the renewal of God's covenant.

LAMENTATIONS Poems by Jeremiah concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the repentance of the people.

EZEKIEL Ezekiel was one of those carried into captivity in Babylonia. His prophecies deal with both the times before and after the destruction of Jerusalem.

DANIEL A young man carried into Babylonian captivity and used by God to deal with several foreign kings.

Minor Prophets

HOSEA A prophet whose life and marriage was used by God to teach the lesson of God's unfailing love and Israel's unfaithfulness.

JOEL Lamentations over the destruction of the land, exhorting the people to repent and promising that God will forgive.

AMOS Prophecies God's judgment on the nations surrounding Israel, and then prophecies that God's strongest judgment will be on Israel, which, in spite of God's gifts, had still done evil.

OBADIAH The shortest Old Testament prophecy, dealing with the destruction of Edom, an enemy of God's people.

JONAH The account of Jonah's commission to preach to a hostile city, his refusal to do so, his encounter with the great fish, and finally his successful preaching to the city.

MICAH A younger contemporary of Isaiah. He prophesied concerning threats of punishment and appeals to repent.

NAHUM Prophecies concerning the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

ZEPHANIAH Prediction of a great day of wrath upon the nations of the earth if the people do not repent.

HABAKKUK Prophecy concerning the destruction of the wicked city in Judah by the Chaldeans.

HAGGAI Rebukes the Jews for their refusal to rebuild the temple of God, while they concentrated on building their own houses.

ZECHARIAH Contains an earnest exhortation to repent and also promises the coming of the Messiah.

MALACHI Attacks the degeneration of the priesthood, which Malachi finds particularly terrible since they now are able to worship again; challenges the unfaithful lack of tithing; and contains a prophecy concerning the forerunner of Christ.

A SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Biographies of Christ

MATTHEW	Matthew was a tax collector who was called by Jesus to be one of His apostles. This Gospel has more references to the Old Testament stories and Scriptures than any of the others and gives evidence to those with a Jewish background that Jesus really is the Messiah.
MARK	The shortest Gospel was written by John Mark who accompanied his uncle, Barnabas, and Paul on their first missionary journey. This Gospel focusses more on the actions of Jesus as the Servant of the Lord and the worker of miracles.
LUKE	Luke, who was known by Paul as a dear friend and doctor (<i>Col. 4:14</i>), wrote this Gospel and the book of <i>Acts</i> . Both of his books are written as evidences to someone named Theophilus, and show Jesus, not only from the Jewish perspective, but also as the Savior of all humanity.
JOHN	The apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel much later than the other three. He gives his inspired perspective with the teachings and characteristics of Jesus that often were not discussed in the first three Gospels.

The Book of History

ACTS	This book is usually referred to as <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> , but many have also pointed out that it could also be called <i>The Acts of the Holy Spirit</i> . Luke, the author, gives the history of the church from its birth on the Day of Pentecost through the missionary travels of the apostles, with Peter and Paul being mentioned the most.
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The Letters or Epistles

ROMANS	Paul wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome before he had visited them. He talks in detail about the Gospel in the first part of his letter. Then he closes with practical applications of how to live in view of the grace that God has given us.
I & 2 CORINTHIANS	Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth points out some of the glaring problems they had. He commends them in his second letter for their repentance and uses his personal life and ministry as an example to them.
GALATIANS	Paul wrote this letter to a group of churches in the region known as Galatia, which is in the middle of what we now call Turkey. He especially them that the Law of Moses, which some people were falsely trying to bind on them, was no longer binding on Christians today.
EPHESIANS	Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus while in prison. In this letter, Paul shows the blessings of being in Christ and teaches some of the practical aspects of a life that pleases the Lord.
PHILIPPIANS	Paul wrote this letter to the church in Philippi while in prison. It exalts Christ and shows the Christians how to live lives that shine in the darkness of the world around them. Even though in prison, Paul was rejoicing and wanted others to rejoice in the Lord as well.

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COLOSSIANS	Another of Paul's prison letters, this one to the church at Colosse exalts Christ as the head of the church and gives practical instructions for lives that are consistent with being in Christ.
I & 2 THESSALONIANS	In these letters to the church at Thessalonica, Paul expresses his love for them and encourages them to continue building one another up. He also answered some questions that they had about the second coming of Jesus.
I & 2 TIMOTHY	These personal letters of Paul to his young friend Timothy were written during the last few years of Paul's life. He passed on encouraging and practical teachings about Timothy's personal life and about his ministry.
TITUS	This personal letter from Paul was written to the faithful minister Titus, who was serving the churches on the island of Crete. Like <i>2 Timothy</i> , this letter describes healthy ways to organize and instruct the churches so that they will make the teachings about God attractive to outsiders.
PHILEMON	A personal letter from Paul to Philemon, concerning Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus. Paul had met Onesimus, converted him, and is now sending him back to Philemon, as a brother.
HEBREWS	The author of this epistle is not known for sure, although many assume that it might be Paul. It is also not addressed to a specific church. In this epistle the Old Testament is referred to over and over, with the constant theme that the New Covenant, through Jesus, is superior to the Old. The epistle also has great encouragements about being faithful and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.
JAMES	James, the brother of the Lord, wrote this epistle to a general audience. He instructs the churches with practical teachings about Christian behavior. He strongly urges them to not just listen to the Word, but to do what it says.
I & 2 PETER	These two letters were written by the apostle Peter to a general audience. Peter gives the early Christians, as well as anyone reading his letters today, hope in the midst of suffering. There are also encouraging words about the second coming of Jesus.
I, 2, & 3 JOHN	These letters are written by the apostle John. He encourages Christians to walk in the light of God and to love one another the way Christ loves us. He makes it clear that anyone who claims to be in Christ must walk as Jesus did.
JUDE	Jude, another brother of the Lord, was referred to as Judas in the Gospels. (<i>Matt. 13:55</i>) His letter is addressed to all Christians and urges them to stay true to the Gospel in the face of false doctrine that was prevalent at the time and faithful in the face of persecution that was also prevalent.

The Book of Prophecy

REVELATION	The apostle John wrote this beautiful, symbolic prophecy. The first three chapters have straight forward warnings and encouragements to the 7 churches in the province of Asia (which we now call Turkey). Then there is the beautiful description of his vision of heaven and the worship around the throne of God. The rest of the book symbolically shows the triumphal victory of King Jesus and His church over Satan and his followers.
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