

The first 5 books are known as the Pentateuch. Traditionally, the author is Moses, but the stories are much older.

Genesis answers the questions: “How did God’s relationship with the world begin?” and “Where did the nation of Israel come from?”

In **Exodus**, God saves Israel from slavery in Egypt, and then enters into a special relationship with them.

In **Leviticus** God gives Israel instructions for how to worship Him

The book of **Numbers** records how Israel fails to trust and obey God, and wanders in the wilderness for 40 years.

In **Deuteronomy** Moses gives Israel instructions (in some ways, a recap of Exodus–Numbers) for how to love and obey God in the Promised Land.

Joshua (Israel’s new leader) leads Israel to conquer the Promised land, then divides it among the twelve tribes of Israel.

Israel enters a cycle of turning from God, falling captive to oppressive nations, calling out to God, then being guided by **Judges** sent from God.

Ruth: A story of two widows who lose everything, and find hope in Israel - leading to the birth of the future King David.

These 6 books record the history of the kings of Israel. The author(s) of Samuel and Kings are unknown. Traditionally, Ezra wrote Chronicles.

1 Samuel: Israel demands a king, who turns out to be quite a disappointment.

2 Samuel: David, a man after God’s own heart, becomes king of Israel.

1 Kings: The kingdom of Israel has a time of peace and prosperity under King Solomon, but afterward splits, and the two lines of kings turn away from God.

2 Kings: Both kingdoms ignore God and his prophets, until they both fall captive to other world empires.

1 Chronicles: This is a brief history of Israel from Adam to David, culminating with David commissioning the temple of God in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles: David’s son Solomon builds the temple, but after centuries of rejecting God, the Babylonians take the southern Israelites captive and destroy the temple.

Ezra, a scribe, writes of the Israelites rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, and he teaches the people to obey God’s laws.

Nehemiah describes how the wall around Jerusalem is rebuilt.

Esther, the Jewish wife of a foreign king finds out about a genocidal plot to kill the Jews. She must ask the king for help.

Satan attacks a righteous man named **Job**, and Job and his friends argue about why terrible things are happening to him.

Psalms is a collection of 150 songs that Israel sang to God - a hymnal for ancient Israel. There were many Psalmists, including King David.

Proverbs: A collection of sayings written by King Solomon and others to help people make wise decisions that bring about justice.

Ecclesiastes is a philosophical exploration of the meaning of life with a surprisingly nihilistic tone for the Bible. Traditionally written by Solomon.

Song of Solomon A love song celebrating love, desire, and marriage. Traditionally written by Solomon, or perhaps written about Solomon or in his style.

God sends the prophet **Isaiah** to warn Israel of future judgment—but also to tell them about a coming king and servant who will “bear the sins of many.” Written by Isaiah and perhaps some of his followers.

God sends **Jeremiah** to warn Israel about the coming Babylonian captivity, but the people don’t take the news well

Lamentations is a collection of dirges lamenting the fall of Jerusalem after the Babylonian attacks. Author is traditionally Jeremiah

God chooses **Ezekiel** to speak for Him to Israel, to tell them the error of their ways and teach them justice.

Daniel becomes a high-ranking wise man in Babylonian & Persian empires. Has prophetic visions concerning Israel’s future. Written by Daniel and others.

The 12 ‘minor’ prophets record prophecies about the devastation and eventual restoration of Israel

Hosea is told to marry a prostitute who leaves him, and he must bring her back: a picture of God’s relationship with Israel.

Joel describes a plague of locusts sent by God to judge Israel, but his judgment on the surrounding nations is coming, too.

A shepherd named **Amos** preaches against the injustice of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Obadiah warns the neighboring nation of Edom that they will be judged for plundering Jerusalem.

A disobedient **Jonah** runs from God, is swallowed by a great fish, and then preaches God’s word to the city of Nineveh.

Micah confronts the leaders of Israel/Judah regarding their injustice, prophesies that one day the Lord will rule in perfect justice.

Nahum foretells of God’s judgment on Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

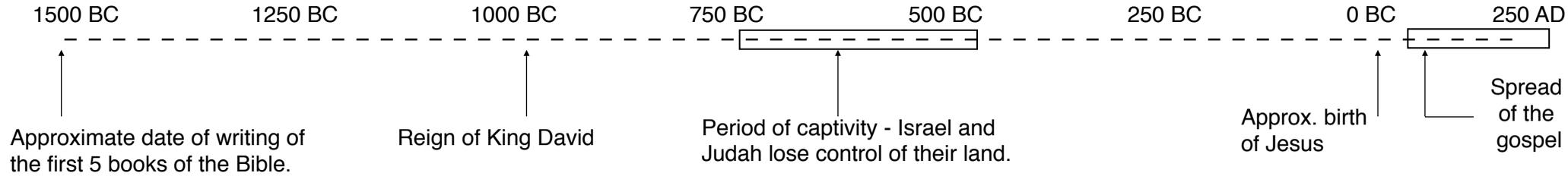
Habakkuk pleads with God to stop the injustice and violence in Judah, but is surprised to find that God will use the violent Babylonians to do so.

Zephaniah God warns that he will judge Israel and the surrounding nations, but also that he will restore them in peace and justice.

The people have abandoned the work of restoring God’s temple in Jerusalem, and so **Haggai** takes them to task.

The prophet **Zechariah** calls Israel to return to God, records prophetic visions that show what’s happening behind the scenes.

God has been faithful to Israel, but they continue to live disconnected from him—so God sends **Malachi** to call them out.



The New Testament

The 4 gospels record the life of Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar in style, while John is different.

Gospel of Matthew: This is an account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, focusing on Jesus' role as the true king of the Jews.

Gospel of Mark: This brief account of Jesus' earthly ministry highlights Jesus' authority & servanthood.

Gospel of Luke: Luke writes the most thorough account of Jesus' life, pulling together eyewitness testimonies to tell the full story of Jesus.

Gospel of John: John lists stories of signs and miracles with the hope that readers will believe in Jesus.

In the book of **Acts**, Jesus returns to the Father, the Holy Spirit comes to the church, and the gospel of Jesus spreads around the world. Written by Luke.

Paul, a Jewish convert to Christianity, writes numerous letters to churches throughout Asia.

Romans Paul summarizes how the gospel of Jesus works in a letter to the churches at Rome.

1 Corinthians Paul writes a disciplinary letter to a fractured church in Corinth, and answers some questions that they've had about how Christians should behave.

2 Corinthians Paul writes a letter of reconciliation to the church at Corinth, and clears up some concerns that they have.

Galatians Paul hears that the Galatian churches have been lead to think that salvation comes from the law of Moses, and writes a (rather heated) letter telling them where the false teachers have it wrong.

Ephesians Paul writes to the church at Ephesus about how to walk in grace, peace, and love.

Philippians An encouraging letter to the church of Philippi from Paul, telling them how to have joy in Christ.

Colossians Paul writes the church at Colossae a letter about who they are in Christ, and how to walk in Christ.

1 Thessalonians Paul has heard a good report on the church at Thessalonica, encourages them to "excel still more" in faith, hope, and love.

2 Thessalonians Paul instructs the Thessalonians on how to stand firm until the coming of Jesus.

1 Timothy Paul gives his protégé Timothy instruction on how to lead a church with sound teaching and a godly example.

2 Timothy Paul is nearing the end of his life, and encourages Timothy to continue preaching the word.

Titus Paul advises Titus on how to lead orderly, counter-cultural churches on the island of Crete.

Philemon Paul strongly recommends that Philemon accept his runaway slave as a brother, not a slave.

Hebrews A letter encouraging Christians to cling to Christ despite persecution, because he is greater. Author unknown.

James A letter telling Christians to live in ways that demonstrate their faith in action. Author: James, likely a brother of Jesus.

1 Peter Peter writes to persecuted Christians, encouraging them to testify to the truth and live accordingly.

2 Peter Peter writes a letter reminding Christians about the truth of Jesus, and warning them of false teachers.

1 John John writes to Christians about keeping Jesus' commands, loving one another, and important things they should know.

2 John A very brief letter about walking in truth, love, and obedience

3 John An even shorter letter about Christian fellowship

Jude A letter encouraging Christians to contend for the faith

Revelation John sees visions of things that have been, things that are, and things that are yet to come

CHOOSE A VERSION

Don't forget to consider audio Bibles if you prefer listening to reading!

<i>Word for word translations</i>	<i>Thought for thought translations</i>	<i>Paraphrases</i>
Word for word translations emphasise the meaning of individual words. They are good for detailed study but sometimes are hard to read. Some are even interlinear, meaning that the translation is displayed below the original language. Versions include: NASB, AMP, RSV, KJV, ESV	Thought for thought translations aim to translate the text as accurately as possible, while still reading clearly and easily. A balance is struck between expressing literary devices as they appear in the original language and making sure that they are easy to understand. Versions include: NIV, NCV, NAB.	These versions take the Biblical text and express it in contemporary language. They aim to make the message as clear as possible. Versions include: Message, NLT.

CHOOSE A READING PLAN

<i>Chronological</i>	<i>Historical</i>	<i>By Genre</i>	<i>A book per week</i>	<i>Interspersed</i>
Follow the Bible in the order in which the events happened. This is good if you'd like to get a sense of the books unfolding.	Follow the Bible in the order in which the books were written. This is more of a literary plan, and you can get an idea of how the Bible came together.	These plans guide you to read the history, poetry, letters, etc, at separate times. This way, you can get a sense of different styles within the Bible.	These plans can let you move more at your own pace, as you can pick shorter or longer books depending on how you want to structure your plan.	These reading tables have you read different parts of the Bible at once. This way, you can make many links between the different parts.

USE RESOURCES

<i>Dictionaries and Maps</i>	<i>Commentaries</i>	<i>Cross referencing</i>	<i>Themes & Imagery</i>
Bible dictionaries help you to understand unfamiliar terms. Maps can help you picture journeys better. Many Bibles include these.	Commentaries provide additional explanation for passages as a whole. We also encourage you to try to interpret passages yourself.	Cross references are contained in the margins of many Bibles and direct you to related parts of the Bible, especially where it quotes itself. If you're struggling to understand a verse, an alternate translation may help.	There are many themes and common images presented in the Bible. Keeping track of these as you read will help you understand its message.

APPLY WHAT YOU READ

<i>Read with someone</i>	<i>Get life guidance</i>	<i>Understand the message</i>
Having a reading companion is always helpful with any book! You can discuss ideas, questions and meanings.	Consider the Bible's teachings about life and society. The Bible has been a source of guidance for people throughout history.	Understand what the Bible says about God's plan for the world.