

# Why Trust the Bible - Week 1 (Intro)

## What this class is about

- First and foremost, this class is about strengthening your faith, and your bond with God and His Word
- We want to walk down this path together by examining an introduction into apologetics, and the historical trustworthiness of the Bible, particularly from the perspective of "Why should we trust the Gospel?"

## What this class is NOT

- This class is not a deep dive into apologetics, creation theory, deep historical study, hermeneutics, or learning how to argue someone into the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Our hope for this class is that you will walk away...
  - Having made a deeper connection with God and His Word, from a very practical, historical perspective
  - Having deepened relationships (or created new relationships) with other people in this class (including us)
  - Having gained an understanding about the difference between Math, Logic, and History
  - With a thirst to dig deeper, do more reading and research, and develop a richer relationship with God's Word
  - Having had fun!

## Intro Conversation Questions

- If someone came up and asked you, "Hey, you seem like a reasonable person, how can you really believe that some old dude held up his staff and parted an entire sea?", what would you say?
- How about if your teenager told you "Mom / Dad, the kids at my school are telling me the Gospel is basically just a big conspiracy theory made up in 200 AD. What am I supposed to say to them when they're making fun of me (and you) for believing it?"

- What difficult questions have you been asked (or been asking yourself), where you didn't really feel like you have a reasonable answer?

## What are apologetics?

- 1 Peter 3:15 - Why we believe what we believe. Why what we believe is true is a reasonable, or arguable position.
- Oxford - reasoned arguments or writings in justification of something, typically a theory or religious doctrine.
- Apologetics is a very wide, and very deep field. MANY historians and theologians have devoted their entire lives to the study. A lot of this study has been in response to intensifying atheistic attack in the last 150 years, largely from scientific advances that gave rise to a "Modernist" anti-theology.

## Why are apologetics important?

They are important for us.

Common ways people (even us, subconsciously) view the Bible:

- It just another legend, fairy tale, or book of wisdom
- Some of the Bible actually happened, and other parts didn't, because they are impossible
- The Bible is a historical book, but sometime we are just interpreting what actually happened incorrectly

How many of you have felt like this, or read something in the Bible that you've questioned, and didn't know how to resolve it? How has that made you feel, or impacted your faith?

This is why apologetics (a reasoned, rational defense of what we believe) has HUGE implications for our daily lives in faith.

***When we believe God's Word to our core, we live it out very differently than if we don't.***

They are important for others... through our witness

- Many believe that Christians are stupid, because they have blind faith in something unprovable.

- Through apologetics, we can reasonably show that our faith is less blind than atheism, and more engaged than agnosticism.
- Being able to show unbelievers, gently, and kindly that we are not stupid, and our beliefs are founded on historically relevant, accurate , is exactly what Peter meant, and has a huge impact on our witness to others.

## A quick prep on History v.s. Math (& Logic)

- It is impossible for History to be Mathematically or Logically proven; that's not it's goal
- Do you believe Plato actually existed? Why?
- When we try to apply Mathematical or Logical constructs to History, we eventually get to the possibility, no matter how small, that nothing actually exists, even us.
- When we examine the Bible, it's incredibly important for us to treat it with the same respect, and the same critical eye that we would any other document purporting to be historically accurate.

## What is the Bible?

**FACT: It's incredibly difficult to defend the Bible, or your belief in it, without at least a basic understanding of where it came from.**

According to the March 2007 edition of Time magazine, the Bible "has done more to shape literature, history, entertainment, and culture than any book ever written. Its influence on world history is unparalleled and shows no signs of abating."

How can one book have so much influence in the world and why is it that so many people trust the scripture within the Bible? Let's start by taking a look at what the Bible actually is and the history of how it came to be.

Bible (Greek Biblia "the books") is not a single book but actually a collection of books sacred in Christianity, Judaism, Samaritanism, Islam, and numerous other faiths. It is in the form of an anthology, a compilation of texts of a variety of forms that are all linked by the belief that they are collectively revelations of God. The texts are historical accounts, hymns and poetry, prayers, proverbs, essays, letters and prophecies. The books that are included in the Bible by a specific religious group are canonical, indicating that group views those writings as the true representation of God's word and will.

## OLD Testament

The books of the Old Testament began as songs and stories that were orally transmitted from generation to generation before being written down in a process that began sometime after 1000 BC and continued for over 1000 years into the period after Christ's life.

Does it make us trust the scripture MORE or LESS when we understand that it is based on oral tradition? Any room to work in discussion of FACT vs TRUTH?)

*What do we know about songs and stories passed down over generations and generations?*

- They are made memorable by using rhymes, patterns, and imagery, which is much of what we see in the earliest Biblical stories.

*What does generation to generation mean?*

- Many many years. We do not know for fact how many. But we can guess it was at least more than 4 or 5 thousand years.

The earliest compilation, containing the first 5 books of the Bible (Torah "law" or Pentateuch "5 books") was accepted as Jewish canon by the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

**Canon definition: a collection or list of sacred books accepted as genuine.**

A second collection of narrative history and prophecy (Nevi'im "prophets") was canonized in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

A third collection containing psalms, proverbs and narrative history (Ketuvim "writings") was canonized between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Taken together, these form the Hebrew Bible or TaNaKh (Torah + Nevi'im + Ketuvim).

The Old Testament, as used in the Christian Bible today, is derived from the expanded Greek translation of the TaNaKh, known as the Septuagint. According to historical legend, this translation came about when 72 Greek-speaking Jewish scholars in Alexandria were asked by Ptolemy II Philadelphus to translate the Torah into Greek for inclusion in the Library of Alexandria. However, there are some writings in the Septuagint that Protestant Christians do not include in their canon, while Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians do. These are often referred to as the Apocrypha (Greek "to hide away"). The Septuagint has four parts: law, history, poetry, and prophets. This is generally how we, as Protestant Christians, describe the Old Testament today.

## NEW Testament

During the rise of Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, new scriptures were written about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Messiah prophesied in the books of the Old Testament. Two collections of these scriptures were accepted as canon by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

- The Gospels
- The Pauline epistles

There were 4 criteria for accepting these (New Testament) writings as canon.

1. **The Apostolicity (Apostolic Origin)** - Written by an apostle or close friend / companion of an apostle
2. **Antiquity** – Must have been written close to the time of the events (I.e. Before 100 AD, while the apostles were still alive)
3. **Orthodoxy** – Must have been in agreement with the standard of Truth handed down from Jesus himself
4. **Universality** – Christians in every part of the known world used and valued the book

The book we will be reading in this class will focus on New Testament history and authenticity and will look more deeply at the issues surrounding New Testament canonization.

## Mass Dissemination of the Bible

Between 385 and 405 AD, the early Christian church translated the Old Testament and New Testament canon into Vulgar Latin, (the commonly spoken Latin of ordinary people) which became known as the Vulgate. The Vulgate was established as the official Latin translation of the Bible used by the Catholic Church by the Council of Trent in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The Protestant church established the King James Version of the Bible in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which may still be the most prevalent English Bible of all time.

Many of us in the room today are probably using CSB, ESV, NIV or a similar modern translation thanks to today's technology. Regardless of translation though, as Protestant Christians today, our Bible will consist of **66 books** (39 OT, 27 NT) written by **40 different authors**.

I will say this one thing about the Bibles we are reading today. Regardless of the translation, they all agree on this:

- There is ONE true God and He alone is the creator of everything
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not change. God sent him to die for our sins. He was resurrected from the dead for the salvation of all who call on His name. This was God's

plan for man from the time of the original sin.

## Studying the Bible and Trustworthiness of Interpretation

When studying the Bible, it is so important to understand that...

***The Bible CANNOT mean today what it did not mean when it was written.***

This is where Hermeneutics and Exegesis come into play.

The primary purpose of Hermeneutics is to determine and understand the meaning of Biblical text by bridging the gap between our minds in the present world and the minds of the Biblical writers at the time of their authorship through a thorough knowledge of the original languages, ancient history and the comparison of Scripture with Scripture.

Exegesis is used to study and interpret Biblical text. This is commonly what we do when we study the Bible using inductive methods, making observations of the scripture we are reading and then drawing conclusions based on those observations.

One thing we have to be aware of when studying scripture, is using Eisegesis, which means reading scripture with a ***preconceived*** notion such as a cultural lens that didn't exist when the scripture was originally written. A common example of eisegesis happens in the reading and interpretation of Rev 3:15-16, John's letter to the church in Laodicea.

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth."

Many people use modern understanding of the terms hot, cold and lukewarm to assume it is meant to describe believers as either being hot for Christ (religiously zealous), cold to Christ (not committed) or lukewarm in their faith (wishesy washy).

But by using Hermeneutics and Exegesis to understand the geography and culture of Laodicea, as well as the original language of the scripture (Greek), one learns that Laodicia was a very wealthy city with an embarrassing water situation. The hot water from neighboring Hierapolis and the cold water of neighboring Colossae were brought into Laodicea through aqueducts. By the time the water got to the city, it was lukewarm and had no purpose like the hot healing water and the cold refreshing water.

Therefore, after a thorough study of the scripture through the lens of a 1<sup>st</sup> century writer to 1<sup>st</sup> century Laodocians we can see that while the Laodocians were content to be blessed, they weren't being good witnesses for Christ and weren't fulfilling any purposes on behalf of His kingdom, which caused John to write angrily to them.

Understanding different methods of the study and interpretation of the Bible are critical when discussing the Bible's trustworthiness.

We need to understand that **certain people's (and sometimes our own) interpretation of scripture may not be accurate.**

But that DOES NOT mean the scripture is wrong, just our interpretation of it.

*Can I get an AMEN?*

# OLD TESTAMENT

# PENTATEUCH

The Pentateuch contains stories about the creation of the world, the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the children of Israel in Egypt, the exodus, and the time the children of Israel spent in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. The books also record the law God gave to the people on Mt. Sinai which laid down the regulations for sacrifice, worship, and daily living. The Pentateuch is also called the Torah.

## GENESIS

**Who:** Moses  
**What:** The Beginnings  
**Where:** Egypt and Canaan  
**When:** c. 1446 BC–1406 BC  
**Why:** To demonstrate that God is sovereign and loves his creation.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Creation, Fall, and Flood (1–11)
- Abraham (12–25)
- Isaac and Jacob (26–36)
- Joseph (37–50)

**Key Verse:** I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. (Genesis 17:7)

## EXODUS

**Who:** Moses  
**What:** Deliverance from Slavery  
**Where:** Egypt and Canaan  
**When:** c. 1446 BC–1406 BC  
**Why:** To show God's faithfulness to the covenant and provide Israel with guidelines for holy living.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Moses (1–7)
- The Plagues (8–13)
- The Exodus (14–18)
- The Law (19–24)
- Tabernacle and Worship (25–40)

**Key Verse:** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14)

## LEVITICUS

**Who:** Moses  
**What:** Law and Sacrifice  
**Where:** Sinai and Canaan  
**When:** c. 1446 BC–1406 BC  
**Why:** To instruct Israel on how to be holy and to be a blessing to others.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Sacrifice (1–7)
- Priesthood (8–10)
- Clean and Unclean (11–15)
- Day of Atonement (16)
- Laws for Daily Life (17–27)

**Key Verse:** Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy. (Leviticus 20:7–8)

## NUMBERS

**Who:** Moses  
**What:** Census and History  
**Where:** Borders of Canaan  
**When:** c. 1446 BC–1406 BC  
**Why:** A reminder of what happens when people rebel against God.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Census (1–9)
- Sinai to Canaan (10–12)
- Spies and Rebellion (13–19)
- Moab (20–36)

**Key Verse:** The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24–26)

## DEUTERONOMY

**Who:** Moses  
**What:** Sermons by Moses  
**Where:** Plains of Moab  
**When:** c. 1446 BC–1406 BC  
**Why:** To remind the people what God expects from them.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Sermon 1: Journey Review (1–4)
- Sermon 2: Laws (5–28)
- Sermon 3: Covenant (29–30)
- Final Farewells (31–34)

**Key Verse:** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)

# HISTORICAL BOOKS

The 12 Historical Books continue with the story of the people of Israel and the conquest of the Promised Land in the book of Joshua, the continuous cycle of disobedience in the book of Judges, the first kings and the United Kingdom, Divided Kingdom, the Assyrian invasion, Babylonian invasion, the years in exile, and the return from exile during the Persian rule.

## JOSHUA

**Who:** Unknown (Joshua or Samuel)  
**What:** History of Conquest  
**Where:** Canaan  
**When:** c. 1300s BC  
**Why:** To assure the people that obedience to God is rewarded.

### Outline (Chapter)

- The Conquest (1–12)
- Dividing the Land (13–22)
- Joshua's Farewell (23–24)

**Key Verse:** Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. (Joshua 1:7)

## JUDGES

**Who:** Unknown (Samuel)  
**What:** History before Kings  
**Where:** Canaan  
**When:** c. 1400 BC–1000 BC  
**Why:** To stress the importance of remaining loyal to God.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Reasons for Failure (1)
- The Judges: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson (2–16)
- Days of Lawlessness (17–21)

**Key Verse:** In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit. (Judges 21:25)

## RUTH

**Who:** Unknown (Samuel)  
**What:** Story of a Faithful Foreigner  
**Where:** Canaan  
**When:** c. 1350 BC–1000 BC  
**Why:** To demonstrate the kind of faithfulness, godliness, loyalty, and love that God desires for us.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Naomi and Ruth (1)
- Ruth meets Boaz (2)
- The Threshing Floor (3)
- The Marriage (4)

**Key Verse:** But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16)

## 1 SAMUEL

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** History of Events  
**Where:** Israel and Judah  
**When:** c. 1100 BC–931 BC  
**Why:** To record how Israel got a king.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Samuel (1–7)
- Saul (8–15)
- Saul and David (16–31)

**Key Verse:** But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22)

## 2 SAMUEL

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** History of Events  
**Where:** Israel and Judah  
**When:** c. 1100 BC–931 BC  
**Why:** To demonstrate the prominence of David's line.

### Outline (Chapter)

- David's Reign in Judah (1–4)
- David Unites Israel (5–10)
- David and Bathsheba (11–12)
- Family Problems (13–20)
- Conclusions (21–24)

**Key Verse:** I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. (2 Samuel 7:9)

# HISTORICAL BOOKS

## 1 KINGS

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** Evaluation of the Kings  
**Where:** In Exile in Babylon  
**When:** 561 BC–539 BC  
**Why:** To demonstrate the value of obeying and the danger of disobeying God.

### Outline (Chapter)

- King Solomon's Reign (1–4)
- Temple Construction (5–8)
- Queen of Sheba (9–10)
- Kingdom Splits (11–16)
- Prophet Elijah (17–22)

**Key Verse:** So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. (1 Kings 3:9a)

## 2 KINGS

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** Evaluation of the Kings  
**Where:** In Exile in Babylon  
**When:** 561 BC–539 BC  
**Why:** To demonstrate the value of obeying God.

### Outline (Chapter)

- The Prophet Elisha (1–8)
- Kings of Judah and Israel (9–16)
- Fall of Israel (17–21)
- King Josiah (22–23)
- Fall of Judah; Exile (24–25)

**Key Verse:** And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "LORD, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth." (2 Kings 19:15)

## 1 CHRONICLES

**Who:** Unknown (Ezra)  
**What:** Review of David's Reign  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 450 BC–400 BC  
**Why:** To encourage the remnant.  
**Key Verse:** "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." (1 Chronicles 4:10)

## 2 CHRONICLES

**Who:** Unknown (Ezra)  
**What:** Highlights Kings of Judah  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 450 BC–400 BC  
**Why:** To show the benefits that come from obedience.

**Key Verse:** As for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him. (2 Chronicles 13:10a)

## EZRA

**Who:** Ezra  
**What:** History of Reconstruction  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 400s BC  
**Why:** Provide a detailed account of the exiles' return and the rebuilding of the temple.

### Outline (Chapter)

- The Exiles Return (1–2)
- Rebuilding the Temple (3–6)
- The Work of Ezra (7–10)

**Key Verse:** With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love to Israel endures forever. And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid." (Ezra 3:11)

## NEHEMIAH

**Who:** Ezra  
**What:** History of Reconstruction  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 400s BC  
**Why:** Rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Nehemiah Returns (1–2)
- Rebuilding of the Walls (3)
- Threats and Persecution (4–7)
- Renewal of Covenant (8–10)
- Dedication and Laws (11–13)

**Key Verse:** Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

## ESTHER

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** Story of Redemption  
**Where:** Persia  
**When:** c. 400s BC  
**Why:** To demonstrate that, in all circumstances, God is in control.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Search for a New Queen (1–2)
- Haman's Plot (3)
- Esther's Plan (4–6)
- Haman's Downfall (7)
- Esther Saves the Jews (8–10)

**Key Verse:** For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14)

# POETRY & WISDOM

The 5 Poetry and Wisdom books include hymns, proverbs, poems, and dramas. They illustrate the creative ways the people of Israel expressed themselves to God and to each other.

## JOB

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** Story of Perseverance  
**Where:** Mesopotamia (Uz)  
**When:** Unknown  
**Why:** To show the sovereignty of God and to illustrate faithfulness in the midst of suffering.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Job Tested (1–3)
- Job's Friends (4–31)
- Elihu's Speech (32–37)
- God's Answer (38–42)

**Key Verse:** I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. (Job 19:25–26)

## PSALMS

**Who:** David, Moses, Asaph, Solomon, Ethan, Sons of Korah  
**What:** Poetry and Song  
**Where:** Ancient Israel  
**When:** c. 1000 BC–450 BC  
**Why:** To communicate with God and worship him.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Book I: Psalms 1–41
- Book II: Psalms 42–72
- Book III: Psalms 73–89
- Book IV: Psalms 90–106
- Book V: Psalms 107–150

**Key Verse:** My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever. (Psalm 145:21)

## PROVERBS

**Who:** Solomon and others  
**What:** Wisdom  
**Where:** Israel  
**When:** c. 900s BC–700s BC  
**Why:** To provide wisdom and guidance for God's children.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Lessons in Wisdom (1–9)
- Proverbs of Solomon (10–22)
- Other Wise Sayings (23–24)
- Solomon's Sayings (25–29)
- Other Proverbs (30–31)

**Key Verse:** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

## ECCLESIASTES

**Who:** Unknown (Solomon)  
**What:** Wisdom  
**Where:** Jerusalem  
**When:** c. 900s BC or 500s BC  
**Why:** A search to discover truth.

### Outline (Chapter)

- The Meaning of Life (1–2)
- Life is Not Always Fair (3–6)
- Wisdom (7–8)
- No One Knows the Future (9–10)
- Obedience to God (11–12)

**Key Verse:** Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14)

## SONG OF SONGS

**Who:** Solomon and others  
**What:** Love Poem  
**Where:** Jerusalem  
**When:** c. 900s BC or 500s BC  
**Why:** To illustrate the joy of authentic love found in marriage.

### Outline (Chapter)

- The Courtship (1–2)
- The Wedding (3–4)
- The Lasting Relationship (5–8)

**Key Verse:** Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. (Song of Songs 8:7)

# MAJOR PROPHETS

The 5 Major Prophets are not called “major” because of their message or quality, but rather because of the length of the books. The prophets brought God’s word which included warning of judgment, warnings and hope for the immediate future (as well as warnings and hope for the distant future), and hope in the coming Messiah.

## ISAIAH

**Who:** Isaiah  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgement  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 701 BC–681 BC  
**Why:** To convince the people that salvation was possible through repentance and hope in the coming Messiah.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Condemnation (1–39)
- Comfort in Exile (40–55)
- Future Hope (56–66)

**Key Verse:** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

## JEREMIAH

**Who:** Jeremiah  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgement  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 626 BC–582 BC  
**Why:** To warn Judah of their destruction, to remind them of their sin, and convince them to submit to the Babylonian invaders.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Jeremiah (1–10)
- Prophetic Warnings (11–28)
- New Covenant (29–39)
- The Fall of Jerusalem (40–52)

**Key Verse:** “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

## LAMENTATIONS

**Who:** Unknown (Jeremiah)  
**What:** Dirge Poem (Lament)  
**Where:** Babylon  
**When:** c. 586  
**Why:** To express the despair of the people of Judah over the loss of their land, city, and temple.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Sorrows of Captives (1)
- Anger with Jerusalem (2)
- Hope and Mercy (3)
- Punishment (4)
- Restoration (5)

**Key Verse:** Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22–23)

## EZEKIEL

**Who:** Ezekiel  
**What:** Prophecy and Warning  
**Where:** Babylon  
**When:** c. 593 BC–571 BC  
**Why:** To confront people about their sin, give them one last chance to repent, and offer hope.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Ezekiel (1–3)
- Judgment of Judah (4–24)
- Judgment on the Nations (25–32)
- The End of the Age (33–39)
- Restoration of Temple (40–48)

**Key Verse:** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)

## DANIEL

**Who:** Daniel  
**What:** Prophecy and Apocalyptic  
**Where:** Babylon  
**When:** c. 605 BC–535 BC  
**Why:** To convince the Jewish exiles that God is sovereign and to provide them with a vision of their future redemption.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Daniel and His Friends (1–6)
- Apocalyptic Visions (7–12)

**Key Verse:** In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. (Daniel 2:44)

# MINOR PROPHETS

The 12 Minor Prophets, called “The Book of the Twelve” in the Hebrew Bible, are just as important as the Major Prophets. They are called “minor” because of the shorter length of the books. They also brought God’s word to the people regarding judgment and hope.

## HOSEA

**Who:** Hosea  
**What:** Prophecy and Warning  
**Where:** Israel  
**When:** c. 752 BC–722 BC  
**Why:** To illustrate Israel’s spiritual adultery and warn of destruction.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- The Unfaithful Wife (1–3)
- The Unfaithful Nation (4–14)

**Key Verse:** Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. (Hosea 4:6)

## JOEL

**Who:** Joel  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgment  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** Unknown  
**Why:** To call Judah to repentance in order to avoid judgment.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Locusts (1)
- Blessings and Curses (2–3)

**Key Verse:** And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. (Joel 2:28b)

## AMOS

**Who:** Amos  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgment  
**Where:** Israel  
**When:** c. 760 BC–753 BC  
**Why:** To accuse and judge Israel for injustice and lack of mercy.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Neighbors Punished (1)
- Israel’s Destruction (2–8)
- Future Hope (9)

**Key Verse:** Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is. (Amos 5:14)

## OBADIAH

**Who:** Obadiah  
**What:** Prophecy  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 586 BC  
**Why:** To prophesy against Edom.  
**Outline: (Verses)**

- Judgment on Edom (1–9)
- Edom’s Violations (10–14)
- Israel’s Victory (15–21)

**Key Verse:** Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. (Obadiah 10)

## JONAH

**Who:** Jonah  
**What:** Story of God’s Mercy  
**Where:** Nineveh  
**When:** c. 783 BC–753 BC  
**Why:** To show that God loves all.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Jonah Flees (1)
- Jonah Prays (2)
- Jonah’s Anger with God’s Mercy (3–4)

**Key Verse:** I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. (Jonah 4:2b)

## MICAH

**Who:** Micah  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgment  
**Where:** Israel and Judah  
**When:** c. 738 BC–698 BC  
**Why:** To warn people of judgment and to offer hope.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Judgment and Deliverance (1–5)
- Confession and Restoration (6–7)

**Key Verse:** He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

## NAHUM

**Who:** Nahum  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgment  
**Where:** Judah and Nineveh  
**When:** c. 663 BC–612 BC  
**Why:** To pronounce judgment on Nineveh and the Assyrian empire.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Judgment and Mercy (1)
- Nineveh’s Destruction (2–3)

**Key Verse:** The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him. (Nahum 1:7)

## HABAKKUK

**Who:** Habakkuk  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgment  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 609 BC–598 BC  
**Why:** To affirm that the wicked will not prevail and to remind Judah that God is in control.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Tough Questions (1–2)
- Praise to the Lord (3)

**Key Verse:** Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. (Habakkuk 3:18)

## ZEPHANIAH

**Who:** Zephaniah  
**What:** Prophecy and Judgment  
**Where:** Judah  
**When:** c. 641 BC–628 BC  
**Why:** To motivate repentance.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Judgment on Judah (1)
- Judgment on the Nations (2)
- Promise of Restoration (3)

**Key Verse:** The great day of the LORD is near—near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. (Zephaniah 1:14)

## NEW TESTAMENT

## GOSPELS & ACTS

The Gospels, which are the first four books of the New Testament, record the good news of God's plan for a Savior through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each writer has a particular method or style to communicate the life and message of Jesus Christ.

### MATTHEW

**Who:** Matthew (also called Levi)

**What:** Gospel

**Where:** Judea

**When:** c. AD 60

**Why:** To show Jesus as the Son of David, the Kingly Messiah who fulfills prophecy.

**Outline (Chapter)**

- Birth and Early Life (1–4)
- Ministry of Christ (5–20)
- Death and Resurrection (21–28)

**Key Verse:** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:18–19)

### MARK

**Who:** John Mark

**What:** Gospel

**Where:** Rome

**When:** c. AD 50s

**Why:** To show Jesus as the Suffering Son of Man sent to serve and not be served.

**Outline (Chapter)**

- Introduction (1)
- Ministry of Christ (2–10)
- Death and Resurrection (11–16)

**Key Verse:** Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:43–45)

Acts is the record of the radically changed "acts" or "actions" of the followers of Jesus Christ after the resurrection. Acts opens with the out-flowing of the Holy Spirit and describes the missionary efforts of the early followers of Jesus as they spread the message of the gospel to Judea and Samaria. Acts also records the actions of the apostle Paul as he and other courageous believers continued to spread the good news of Jesus to the Jews and Gentiles of the Roman Empire.

### LUKE

**Who:** Luke (The Physician)

**What:** Gospel

**Where:** Caesarea

**When:** c. AD 60–AD 62

**Why:** To show Jesus as the Savior of the World who has compassion for all human beings.

**Outline (Chapter)**

- Birth and Early Life (1–4)
- Ministry of Christ (5–19)
- Death and Resurrection (20–24)

**Key Verse:** Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." (Luke 9:23–24)

### JOHN

**Who:** John (The Beloved Disciple)

**What:** Gospel

**Where:** Asia Minor

**When:** c. AD 85–AD 95

**Why:** To show Jesus as the Son of God, the Word made flesh, who provides eternal life for all who believe in him.

**Outline (Chapter)**

- Introduction (1)
- Ministry of Christ (2–12)
- Private Ministry (13–17)
- Death and Resurrection (18–21)

**Key Verse:** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

### ACTS

**Who:** Luke (The Physician)

**What:** History of Early Church

**Where:** Caesarea and Rome

**When:** c. AD 60–AD 62

**Why:** To record how the Holy Spirit acted through believers to spread the Word of God.

**Outline (Chapter)**

- Jerusalem (1–7)
- Judea and Samaria (8–11)
- Paul's Journeys (12–20)
- Paul Taken to Rome (21–28)

**Key Verse:** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

# PAUL'S EPISTLES (LETTERS)

The apostle Paul wrote 13 letters to young churches, pastors, and friends in order to guide, encourage, and correct them. Most of these letters served a specific purpose or addressed a specific question or problem.

## ROMANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Roman Christians  
**Where:** Corinth  
**When:** c. AD 57  
**Why:** To illustrate law, faith, salvation, and righteous living.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Christian Gospel (1–8)
- Israel (9–11)
- Christian Life (12–16)

**Key Verse:** Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:1–2a)

## 1 CORINTHIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Church in Corinth  
**Where:** Ephesus  
**When:** c. AD 55–56  
**Why:** To address division and immorality and to encourage them to love each other.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Divisions (1–4)
- Morality (5–11)
- Spiritual Gifts (12–14)
- The Resurrection (15–16)

**Key Verse:** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Corinthians 13:4–5)

## 2 CORINTHIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Church in Corinth  
**Where:** Philippi  
**When:** c. AD 56  
**Why:** To defend Paul's call as an apostle, to address deceivers.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Apostolic Characteristics (1–7)
- Giving (8–9)
- Paul's Defense (10–13)

**Key Verse:** But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:9)

## GALATIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Churches in Galatia  
**Where:** Asia Minor  
**When:** c. AD 48–49 or AD 54–55  
**Why:** To warn against legalism and defend justification by faith as well as Paul's apostolic authority.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Paul's Defense (1–2)
- Justification by Faith (3–4)
- The Christian Life (5–6)

**Key Verse:** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22–23)

## EPHESIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Church in Ephesus  
**Where:** Prison in Rome  
**When:** c. AD 60–AD 62  
**Why:** To show believers what it means to be a follower of Christ and encourage them in their spiritual walk.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Spiritual Blessings (1–3)
- The Christian Life (4–6)

**Key Verse:** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

## PHILIPPIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Church in Philippi  
**Where:** Prison in Rome  
**When:** c. AD 60–AD 62  
**Why:** To express Paul's love and affection for the Philippians.

**Key Verse:** Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe. (Philippians 2:14–15)

## COLOSSIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Church in Colossae  
**Where:** Prison in Rome  
**When:** c. AD 60–AD 62  
**Why:** To counteract heretical teachings and exhort believers.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Thanksgiving (1)
- Work of Christ (1–2)
- Finish the Race (3–4)
- Final Greetings (4)

**Key Verse:** For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. (Colossians 2:9–10)



# PAUL'S EPISTLES (LETTERS)

## 1 THESSALONIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to the Church in Thessalonica  
**Where:** Corinth  
**When:** c. AD 50–AD 52  
**Why:** To emphasize Christ's return and to stress commitment.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Faith and Example (1–3)
- Living for God (4)
- Christ's Return (4–5)

**Key Verse:** Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:16–22)

## 2 THESSALONIANS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to the Church in Thessalonica  
**Where:** Corinth  
**When:** c. AD 50–AD 52  
**Why:** To emphasize Christ's return and to encourage believers.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Praise and Encouragement (1)
- Christ's Return (2)
- Pray and Work (3)

**Key Verse:** We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.  
(2 Thessalonians 3:4–6)

## 1 TIMOTHY

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Timothy  
**Where:** Rome  
**When:** c. AD 62–AD 66  
**Why:** To remove false doctrine and suggest proper leadership for the church in Ephesus.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Trouble in Ephesus (1)
- Church Leadership (2–3)
- False Teachers (4)
- Discipline (5)
- Paul's Advice to Timothy (6)

**Key Verse:** Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.  
(1 Timothy 4:12–13)

## 2 TIMOTHY

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Timothy  
**Where:** Prison in Rome  
**When:** c. AD 66–AD 67  
**Why:** To encourage Timothy to remain faithful in ministry even in the midst of suffering.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Thanksgiving (1)
- Call to Remain Faithful (2)
- Authority of God's Word (3)
- Lead a Godly Life (3–4)

**Key Verse:** From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.  
(2 Timothy 3:15–17)

## TITUS

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Titus  
**Where:** Rome  
**When:** c. AD 64–AD 66  
**Why:** To encourage the church in Crete to do good works.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Instruction for Titus (1)
- Living the Faith (2–3)
- Final Instructions (3)

**Key Verse:** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4–7)

## PHILEMON

**Who:** Paul  
**What:** Letter to Philemon  
**Where:** Prison in Rome  
**When:** c. AD 60–AD 62  
**Why:** To appeal to Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus, a runaway slave.

### Outline (Verses)

- Salutations (1–3)
- Philemon's Love and Faith (4–7)
- Paul's Appeal (8–22)
- Final Greetings (23–25)

**Key Verse:** So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self.  
(Philemon 17–19)

# GENERAL EPISTLES & REVELATION

The 8 General Epistles were written by other apostles and leaders including Simon Peter, James, John, and Jude. The General Epistles were addressed to the early Christians to provide guidance, encouragement through persecution, and warnings of false teachings.

## HEBREWS

**Who:** Unknown  
**What:** Letter to Hebrew Believers  
**Where:** Unknown  
**When:** c. AD 60–AD 69  
**Why:** To emphasize the superiority of Christ over the Old Covenant.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Supremacy of Christ (1–4)
- The New Covenant (5–10)
- The Life of Faith (11–13)

**Key Verse:** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

## JAMES

**Who:** James  
**What:** Letter to Jewish Believers  
**Where:** Jerusalem  
**When:** c. AD 49  
**Why:** Encouragement to live out one's faith within the Christian community.

### Outline (Chapter)

- Living a Life of Faith (1–2)
- Faith without Works (2–3)
- Speech and Wisdom (3–4)
- Wealth and Prayer (5)

**Key Verse:** Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. (James 1:19–20)

## 1 PETER

**Who:** Peter  
**What:** Letter to All Christians  
**Where:** Rome  
**When:** c. AD 64–AD 65  
**Why:** To call Christians to holiness.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Holiness and Submission (1–2)
- Suffering (3–4)
- Advice for Old and Young (5)

**Key Verse:** The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. (1 Peter 4:7)

## 2 PETER

**Who:** Peter  
**What:** Letter to All Christians  
**Where:** Rome  
**When:** c. AD 64–AD 65  
**Why:** To warn against false teachers.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Living Like Christ; False Teachers (1–2)
- The Return of Christ (3)

**Key Verse:** For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

## 1 JOHN

**Who:** John  
**What:** Letter to All Christians  
**Where:** Ephesus  
**When:** c. AD 85–AD 95  
**Why:** To emphasize love in Christ.  
**Outline (Chapter)**

- Living in the Light (1–2)
- Living in Love (3–4)
- Living by Faith (5)

**Key Verse:** Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

## 2 JOHN

**Who:** John  
**What:** Letter to the Elect Lady  
**Where:** Ephesus  
**When:** c. AD 85–AD 95  
**Why:** To warn against heresy and false teachers.  
**Key Verse:** Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. (2 John 8)

## 3 JOHN

**Who:** John  
**What:** Letter to Gaius  
**Where:** Ephesus  
**When:** c. AD 85–AD 95  
**Why:** To praise Gaius for his loyalty to the truth and criticize Diotrephes for his pride.  
**Key Verse:** I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. (3 John 4)

## JUDE

**Who:** Jude  
**What:** Letter to all Christians  
**Where:** Unknown  
**When:** c. AD 60s–AD 80s  
**Why:** To warn against heresy.  
**Key Verse:** To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy. (Jude 24)

The book of Revelation addresses seven churches in Asia Minor (Turkey today). It encourages believers who are experiencing persecution. Revelation illustrates that God is in control and that all people were created to love and worship God.

## REVELATION

**Who:** John  
**What:** Letter to Seven Churches  
**Where:** Island of Patmos  
**When:** c. AD 90–AD 96  
**Why:** To give hope to persecuted Christians and provide a vision of Christ's return.

### Outline (Chapter)

- The Seven Churches (1–4)
- Visions (5–16)
- God's Triumph (17–20)
- The New Creation (21–22)

**Key Verse:** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1)