

Know Your Bible

“The 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament form one complete book – the Bible – setting forth four great truths: (1) the reality of creation; (2) the everlasting nature of Christ; (3) the sovereignty of God; (4) man’s freedom of choice and accountability unto God.”

1. Hebrews 1:1-3.
2. John 1:1-3, 14.
3. Isaiah 43:10-13.
4. Acts 17:30-31.

God has revealed Himself to man in at least three ways...

1. Creation – Romans 1:20.
2. Divine Revelation – 1 Corinthians 2:9-13.
3. Jesus Christ – John 14:7-9.

The Bible is a collection of books – Daniel 9:1-2.

These writings are referred to as...

Scripture - 2 Timothy 3:15

Oracles of God - 1 Peter 4:11

Word of God - Hebrews 4:12

Testaments/Covenants - Hebrews 9:15

It was written over a period of 1,600 years and by at least 40 different writers.

Genesis

Key word/thought – *Beginnings*.

Physical creation/existence; human existence; marriage; sin and its consequences; worship; death; nations; Messianic prophecies; covenants.

4 great events of chapters 1-11...

1. Creation
2. Fall
3. Flood
4. Nations

4 primary people from chapters 12-50...

1. Abraham (11:26-25:11)
2. Isaac (21-35)
3. Jacob (25:19-49:33)

4. Joseph (30:22-50:26)

Jesus and Genesis...

1. 3:15 – Galatians 4:4
2. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4 – Galatians 3:16
3. 49:8-12 – Hebrews 7:14; Revelation 5:5

Exodus

Key word/thought – *Deliverance* or *Redemption*

Exodus is a combination of Greek terms: *ek* – out of, *odos* – way

Key passage (s)...

- 1:6-8
- 3:7-10
- 12-14
- 19-20

The focus of this book shifts from the family of Jacob (1:5) to the nation of Israel (1:9).

Main events:

1. Birth and preservation of Moses (2:1-10; 6:20)
2. Moses' change of position (Acts 7:20-23)
3. 10 plagues (7:14-10:29; 12:29-30)
4. Institution of the Passover (12)
5. The exodus (12:31-42)
6. Red Sea crossing (14)
7. Bread and water (16-17)
8. Sinai and the Law (19-20)
9. The tabernacle, furniture, priesthood (25-31; 35:4-40:38)
10. Idolatry (32)

Leviticus

Key word/thought – *Holy, blood, atonement*

Leviticus means *pertaining to Levi*. Much of the book has to do with the role of the tribe of Levi in the tabernacle/temple and sacrifices.

It also includes civic, domestic, dietary, and sanitation instructions among the Israelites.

Key passages...

- 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26 – holiness of Israel
- 16-17 – atonement and blood
- 18:24-30 – sin and defilement

- 23 – Jewish feasts
- 26 – blessing and cursing

Having been delivered from Egypt, God reveals many laws and requirements in Leviticus. So far as we can tell, the book of Leviticus only a few weeks after the departure from Egypt (Num. 1:1).

Numbers

The book gets its title from the two censuses of Israel (1:1-46 and 26:1-51).

Key word/thought – the wilderness wanderings, spying out the land, rebellion against God, rebellion against Moses, multiple complaints, the delivered generation forbidden entrance to Canaan.

The book also contains further laws/requirements of Israel.

Specific services of the temple and the “who” of them.

- Based on the sons of Levi – Gershon, Kohath, Merari (3:16-17).
- Gershonites – 3:21-26; 4:21-28
- Kohathites – 3:27-31; 4:1-20
- Merarites – 3:33-37; 4:29-33

The book also deals specifically with God’s leadership throughout the wandering – 9:15-23.

70 elders are given the Spirit and assist Moses in dealing with Israel – 11:16-25.

Rebellions against Moses – 12, 16.

Spying out the land is a turning point in the history of Israel – 13-14.

Moses’ sin – 20:1-13.

The bronze serpent – 21:4-9; John 3:14-15.

Balaam – 22-24.

Inheritance laws – 27, 36.

Deuteronomy

The book gets its name from the contents – δεύτερος (second) and νόμος (law).

The book is a recapitulation of the all the events from the time they left Mt. Sinai after having received the law (1:5-8).

Time – 1:3

The book repeatedly appeals to the love of God and His constant provision for Israel (8:1-5; 29:2-6).

There are repeated statements of Israel's stubbornness – 9:6, 13; 10:16; 31:27.

There is a constant emphasis of carefully observing all that the law required – 5:32-33; 15:5; 28:13-14.

It was possible for Israel to do what God required – 30:11-14.

There are repeated expressions of God's love for Israel – past, present, and future.

The "10 Commandments" – 4:13-14; 10:4.

They are called the "Law of Moses" (Jos. 8:32) and the "Law of God" (Neh. 10:28).

The law was inscribed on tablets of stone – 4:13; 9:9-11; 10:1-3.

Deuteronomy lays out the way of life and the way of death – 28; 30:15-16.

Joshua

Joshua has been called "The Book of Conquests."

It records the events of Israel crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land and beginning to conquer the inhabitants of the land.

Joshua was chosen to lead Israel – Num 27:18-21.

The book records the encouragement given to Joshua as leader (1:5-9) and to the people to do as God commanded (22:5).

The book reports that all of God's promises concerning the land had been fulfilled (11:23; 21:43-45; 23:14; 24:13).

We learn about the effects of both obedience (6) and sin (7), not only on the specific individual, but also on others (7:1).

The book also records the division of the land among the tribes of Israel.

Chapters 23-24 record Joshua's farewell address and emphasizes the ability of the people to choose whom they would serve (24:13-16).

Judges

While Joshua is the "Book of Conquests," Judges is the "Book of Failures."

Key thought – 17:6; 18:1, 7; 19:1; 21:25

The account begins with hope – 1:1, 4, 19, 22

Judges records 300-400 years of history and 13 leaders granted to Israel by God

Othniel (3:7-11) Ehud (3:12-30) Shamgar (3:31) Deborah (4-5)

Gideon (6:11-8:35) Abimelech (9) Tola (10:1-2) Jair (10:3-5)

Jephthah (11:1-12:7) Ibzan (12:8-10) Elon (12:11-12) Abdon (12:13-15)
Samson (13-16)

1:26 begins the downward trend.

Chapter 2 records the beginning of the downward moral and spiritual spiral of the nation.

2:7-10 is key!

2:13 is a key!

The first sixteen chapters cover Israel's repeated departures from God and the judges that He sent as a result of their outcry in oppression.

10:11-16 is significant.

The last five chapters are various accounts of the depravity that existed because there was no leadership in Israel.

Ruth

The book of Judges records the spiritual "dark ages" of Israel. The events covered by the book of Ruth occurred during that time (Ruth 1:1).

This book shows that there were always faithful, godly people – even during the worst times.

Main characters: Elimelech and Naomi (Mara – 1:20)

Mahlon and Ruth (4:10)

Chilion and Orpah

Boaz, the "*next kinsmen*" (KJV) or "*close relative*" (NKJ).

The book shows the value of family devotion and the keeping of the law.

Elimelech was from Bethlehem in Judah (1:1) who went to live in Moab because of famine. It was during this time that his sons married two Moabite women.

Moab was the son of Lot through his oldest daughter (Gen. 19:37).

Ruth was a *virtuous* woman. A term used throughout the OT and means "strength."

The book of Ruth also is a lesson on the providence of God.

The Law of Moses had regulations on land and relatives. Lev. 25:23-25; Deut. 25:5-10; Ruth 3:9-13

It also had laws on taking care of the needy – Lev. 19:9-10; Ruth 2:1-2.

It was through Boaz and Ruth that Christ was born – Ruth 4:18-22; Matt. 1:4-6.

First Samuel

Key thought – Israel’s transition from judges to a monarchy.

Key characters – Hannah, Samuel, Eli, Saul, David, Jonathan.

Major events:

1. Birth of Samuel (1).
2. The state of the priesthood and judges (2:12-17, 29; 8:1-3).
3. Ark of the covenant captured (4).
4. Israel demands a king (8).
5. Saul’s arrogance and disobedience (13, 15).
6. David anointed (16).
7. David and Goliath (17).
8. Saul’s pursuit of David (18:1-27:4).
9. David and Jonathan’s relationship (18:1-4).

One of the major lessons from this book is about the influence of parents:

1. Hannah with Samuel (1:11, 24-28; 2:1-11).
2. Eli with Hophni and Phinehas (2:12-17, 22-36; 3:13).
3. Samuel with Joel and Abijah (8:1-3).
4. Saul with Jonathan.

Second Samuel

Key thoughts – The book is all about the reign of David and his personal life.

Key characters – David, Joab (commander of David’s army), Nathan (God’s prophet), Absalom (David’s third son).

Key events...

1. David anointed as king in Hebron (2:1-11) and then in Jerusalem (5:1-5).
2. Uzzah and the ark (6).
3. God’s covenant with David (7:1-17).
4. Bathsheba and Uriah (11-12).
5. Absalom’s rebellion (15).
6. Absalom’s death (18).
7. David’s census (24).

First Kings

Key thoughts – The United Kingdom of Israel under Solomon. The division of the kingdom into Northern Israel (Israel, Samaria) and Southern Israel (Judah).

Key characters – Solomon (1-11), the kings of Israel and Judah, Jeroboam, Elijah, Ahab and Jezebel.

Key events...

1. God's two appearances to Solomon (3:1-15; 9:1-9).
2. The building of the temple (5-6).
3. Solomon's speech and prayer of dedication of the temple (8:14-66).
4. Queen of Sheba visits Solomon (10:1-13).
5. Solomon's departure (11:1-13).
6. Rehoboam (Solomon's son) takes advice (12:1-24).
7. The kingdom splits between Rehoboam (S) and Jeroboam (N).
8. Jeroboam's golden calves (12:25-33).
9. Elijah's prophecies and miracles (1 Kg. 17-2Kg. 2).
10. Ahab & Jezebel (16:29-21:29).

Second Kings

Key thoughts/events...

- The Northern Kingdom from Ahaziah (1) to the Assyrian captivity (722 BC).
- The end of Elijah's time as the prophet of Israel (1-2).
- Elisha's time as a prophet (2-13).
- The Kingdom of Judah is also covered (8-25).
- The destruction and Assyrian captivity of Northern Israel (17).
- Chapters 18-20 are paralleled in Isaiah 36-39.
- The reign of Manasseh and the consequences (21:10-16).
- Josiah's reformation (22:1-23:25).
- Southern Israel (Judah) and Babylonian captivity (24-25).

First Chronicles

This book is a condensed version of genealogies (1-9) and Israelite history to the death of David.

The six books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were originally one document.

Samuel and Kings trace the history of the United Kingdom of Israel, as well as both sides of the Divided Kingdom.

First Chronicles covers the progression of David's reign (11:1-29:25). It also serves well as a supplement to 1-2 Samuel.

Chapters 22-27 covers David's preparations and organization of the temple and its services.

Chapters 28-29 covers the transition from David to Solomon.

Supplement to 1-2 Samuel

1 Chronicles 11:15-47 – 2 Samuel 23:13-24

1 Chronicles 12 – 1 Samuel 27, 30; 2 Samuel 2

1 Chronicles 13 – 2 Samuel 6-7

1 Chronicles 14 – 2 Samuel 5
1 Chronicles 15 – 2 Samuel 6:12-23
1 Chronicles 16:1 – 2 Samuel 6:17
1 Chronicles 17 – 2 Samuel 7
1 Chronicles 18 – 2 Samuel 8
1 Chronicles 19 – 2 Samuel 10
1 Chronicles 20 – 2 Samuel 12, 21
1 Chronicles 21 – 2 Samuel 24
1 Chronicles 28-29 – 1 Kings 2-3

Second Chronicles

This book covers the history of Israel from Solomon to the decree of Cyrus that permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem in 536 BC.

It parallels with 1-2 Kings and focuses solely on the Southern Kingdom of Israel – Judah.

The demise of the Kingdom is indicated in 1:13-17.

Chapters 1-9 record Solomon's construction of the temple.

Chapters 10-11 record the division of the United Kingdom.

Restoration is a key thought throughout the book – 15:1-5; 17:7-9; 31:20-21.

The wickedness and repentance of Manasseh – 33:1-20.

Chapter 36 covers the last four evil kings of the kingdom of Judah and her downfall.

The decree of Cyrus (536 BC) is recorded in 36:22-23. This was also prophesied by Isaiah (44:24-45:1) about 150 years before it happened.

Ezra

Key – Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

Contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah – 6:14-15.

Covers from 536-458 BC.

Ezra 1-6 – Return under Zerubbabel, governor of Judah (536 BC).

- Altar rebuilt, worship restarted, temple foundation laid.
- Because of opposition, the temple reconstruction ceased for 16 years (4:1-5).
- It was resumed under the reign of Darius the Mede (Ezra 5-6).

Ezra 7-10 – Ezra and his return (458 BC).

- Ezra was a scribe and a priest – 7:6, 11.
- Mentioned only in Ezra 7, 10 and Nehemiah 8, 12.
- His work – 7:10.
- He had to deal with intermarriages among the pagans (9-10).
- The hope of Israel in this circumstance – 10:1-4 (Deut. 7:1-5).

Nehemiah

Key – Rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

The book is dated in the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes (465-423 BC). This is the end of OT history.

Nehemiah is a book of prayer and confession – 1:5-11; 9.

The wall is viewed (2:11-15) and rebuilt (3-6). Throughout the building they have opposition (4:1-3, 7-8; 6:1-14).

“God’s hand” is seen throughout (2:8, 18, 20; 4:15, 20; 6:15-16).

The key to the work being accomplished – 4:6.

The role of Ezra is key – 8.

Nehemiah dealt with intermarriages – 13:23-27 (Ezra 10).

Ezra and Nehemiah’s Common Problem

Ezra the scribe returned to Jerusalem in the 7th year (Ezra 7:8 – 458 BC) of the reign of Artaxerxes of Persia (465-423 BC).

Nehemiah returned in the 20th year (445 BC – Neh. 2:1) of Artaxerxes.

One of the problems that came as a result of the captivity was the intermarriage of the Israelites with those of other nations (Deut. 7:1-5).

Ezra 9-10 (Neh. 13:23-27)

The problem – Ezra 9:1-4

The prayer – Ezra 9:5-15

The mourning – Ezra 10:1-4

The solution – Ezra 10:5-17

The specifics – Ezra 10:18-44

One of the noticeable things on the matter is the agreement to “*do according to the law*” (Ezra 10:3-4).

Esther

“In the days of Ahasuerus” – 485-465 BC. The events of this book took place in Persia during the days of Ezra’s return to Jerusalem.

Key thought – The providence of God among the Jewish nation.

A unique feature is that the name of God is not mentioned in the book.

Three lessons from Esther:

1. Vashti’s example for all women (1:10-22). 1 Peter 3:1-3
2. The preservation of the Jews by the courage of Mordecai (2:21-23) and Esther (4, 7).
3. The providence of God toward His people in a foreign land (6, 8-9).

The establishment of the Feast of Purim (*Lots*) is recorded. Will be celebrated March 16-17, 2022. It is so named because Haman had cast lots to determine when to destroy the Jews from Persia (3:6-7).

They read the book of Esther, give money to at least two poor people, send food to at least one person, and drink wine.

Job

Key thought – The reality of suffering and the questioning of it.

Characters – God, Satan, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu.

Job in the Bible – Ezekiel 14:14-20 and James 5:11.

Chapters 1-2 – God presents a challenge to Satan about the integrity of Job. We also learn of the accountability and limited power of Satan.

From chapter 3 to 37, Job and his three friends alternate in discussion about Job’s condition, how he got there, and what to do to change it.

Job (3), Eliphaz (4-5), Job (6-7), Bildad (8), Job (9-10), Zophar (11), Job (12-14), Eliphaz (15), Job (16-17), Bildad (18), Job (19), Zophar (20), Job (21), Eliphaz (22), Job (23-24), Bildad (25), Job (26-31), Elihu (32-37)

God speaks (38-41), Job’s restoration (42)

Lessons:

1. Satan’s power and knowledge is limited.
2. Not all suffering is explainable.
3. Not all suffering is a direct result of my own personal sin.
4. Being righteous does not mean that you will not suffer.
5. There is value in suffering.
6. Man is extremely limited in his knowledge of the power and wisdom of God.
7. Life is brief and uncertain.

8. There is hope of vindication when we stand before God.

Proverbs

Proverb – “*a short, pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.*”

Author(s) – Solomon, Agur (30), Lemuel (31)

1 Kings 4:32 states that Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs!

The key thought of the book is “*the fear of the Lord*” (1:7, 29; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26-27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17).

The book speaks of duty to God, self, neighbor, family, and society at large.

There is a constant contrast between the wise and the fool and the godly and the ungodly.

Wisdom is personified as a woman crying out for people to listen to her and seek her (1:20-33).

The book presents itself as a father admonishing his son (1:8, 10; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 5:1).

The advice of parents to children (4).

There are constant warnings about the heart, mouth, eyes, and feet (4:23-27).

Song of Solomon

Key thought – “*The message of this book is the beauty, happiness, and power of faithful love. It is a love song written by Solomon and abounding in beautiful imagery.*”

Many have tried to spiritualize or allegorize SOS because, they say, “*it wouldn't make sense to have this kind of content in the Bible.*”

JB Coffman wrote, “*That the SOS is indeed some kind of allegory is inherent in the fact that there is absolutely no other possibility of making sense out of it or finding any possible justification of its appearance in the Bible.*”

He believed that (1) Solomon represents “*Satan and all the temptations of the world*” and (2) “*the Shepherd stands for Christ and His love for the world.*” He goes on to say that the Shulamite is God's people – both Old Covenant and New.

This is an inspired account of the love between a man and a woman who would become husband and wife.

The book is about two who are “*seeking and finding*” and are physically attracted to one another.

1-4 is a dialogue between the two who will soon become one (4:7, 12). Chapter 5 shows that they have become one and consummated their marital relationship and that they are set apart for one another (6:8-9).

8:6-7 summarizes the desire and expression of marital love.

One thing the book does is encourage the purity of the physical relationship between a husband and wife (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). One reason God created marriage was for companionship and for a relationship that is to be enjoyed exclusively within the bounds of marriage (Gen. 2:18-24; 1 Cor. 7:1-5).

Isaiah

Date of prophecy – 1:1. Contemporary with Hosea, Amos, Micah.

Key phrases – The Holy One of Israel and The Lord of Hosts

Key word – Salvation (28 times)

Assyria was the dominate world empire (36-39).

Isaiah is the Messianic prophet – 2:2-3; 4; 7:13-14; 9:1-2; 9:6-7; 11; 28:16; 40:3-8; 42:1-4; 53; 61:1-2; 62:1-2; 65-66.

His main purpose was to reveal God’s desire to “reason” with His people (1:18).

Chapters 1-5 lay out God’s case against Judah. Chapter 6 is Isaiah’s commission.

John 12:37-41 reveals the meaning of Isaiah 6.

The people of Isaiah’s day had inverted morality (5:20).

Isaiah is also a prophet to the nations surrounding Judah (13-23).

Chapters 36-39 is also recorded in 2 Kings 18-20.

Isaiah addressed Judah’s problem with idolatry (44).

A major topic addressed is the salvation that would be extended to the Gentiles (56, 60-66).

Jeremiah

Contemporary with Ezekiel, Daniel, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.

Date of the book – 1:2-3.

Josiah reigned from 640-608 BC. Jeremiah’s work began in 627 and ended in the 11th year of Zedekiah (587 BC).

Key words – backslide, forsake, return.

His commission – 1:4-10.

He is the “weeping prophet” – 9:1-2.

He was persecuted – 18:18; 26:7-11; 37:11-38:6

Problems of his day – 2:8, 12-13, 31-32; 3:6-10; 5:30-31; 6:13-17; 8:20; 14:13-14; 23:25-27

Significant prophecies – 22:24-30; 23:1-6; 25:1-14; 29; 31:31-34

Jeremiah 52 records the final downfall of Judah to the Babylonians.

Lamentations

Written by Jeremiah after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

2 Chronicles 36:11-21 sets the historical context.

The book focuses on the results of and reasons for Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem – 1:5; 4:13.

Jeremiah expresses his emotional distress over the situation – 1:16; 2:11; 3:48-49.

Part of the problem was false prophesying – 2:14.

The conditions of the day – 2:12, 20-21; 4:4-5, 9-10; 5:10-14.

There is also a message of hope – 3:19-27.

Israel's hope could only be realized through repentance – 3:40-42.

Ezekiel

Date – The fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (1:2). 2 Kings 24:8-12 and 2 Chronicles 36:9-10 record this event. It occurred in 597 BC, therefore, Ezekiel's work began in 592 BC.

Ezekiel was in Babylon during the captivity (1:1). He was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel. His wife died during captivity (24:15-27).

The vision of chapter 1 revealed that God was aware of what was going on with His people.

His mission was to conduct himself as a watchman for Israel (3:16-27).

The main thrust of the book is individual accountability to God (18:1-4, 20).

He addressed God's people (1-24, 33-48) and the surrounding nations (25-32).

He expressed God's desire for Israel's repentance (18:19-32; 33:10-11).

All classes of people were guilty (22:23-31).

Ezekiel 37 pictures the restoration of Israel after Babylonian captivity.

There are many similarities in Ezekiel and Revelation – the four beasts (1:5; Rev. 4:6), God's servants sealed (:3-4; Rev. 7), Gog and Magog (38:2-3; Rev. 20:8).

Daniel

Date – 3rd year of Jehoiakim, who reigned from 609-598 BC. Nebuchadnezzar first attacked Jerusalem in 606 BC and took many Jews captive.

Daniel covers from 606 BC and Nebuchadnezzar (1-4) to Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson (7-8, 5), to the rise of the Persian empire under Darius and Cyrus (6, 9-12). The book covers about 70 years.

The visions and dreams cover the time period from Babylon to Rome.

- Nebuchadnezzar's image - 2:36-45.
- Daniel's beasts – 7:17.
- Daniel's visions – 9-12.

Themes in the book:

- Faithfulness to God, even in difficult circumstances – 1, 3, 6.
- God rules in the kingdoms of men – 4:17, 25, 32.
- The kingdom of God would be established during the days of a 4th world empire – 2, 7.
- The prophecies and visions always include Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.
- God's people do not have to compromise when under pressure from society.

Hosea

Jeroboam II reigned from 788-747 BC. Uzziah began reigning in 785 BC and Hezekiah's reign ended in 698 BC. Most people date this book around 750 BC.

Hosea and his wife, Gomer, are used as an illustration of Israel's adulterous relationship with God (1:2). The names of the children are revealing:

- Jezreel = God scatters.
- Lo-Ruhamah = no mercy.
- Lo-Ammi = no pity.

Yet, there is also a message of hope throughout (1:10-2:1).

2:1-13 and 4 lay out God's case against His people.

2:14-23 reveals a restoration and a new covenant to be made.

"David" would become their king (3). This is prophetic of the reign of Christ, the son of David.

There is a constant call to repentance (6, 14).

The problem was not with God (6:4; 7:8-10).

God's love for His people is emphasized throughout (11:1-4, 8-9).

Joel

The prophet does not date his work.

He speaks of a locust plague that was "*destruction from the Almighty*" (1:15).

"*The day of the Lord*" is a key thought in the book (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14).

His message was a message of judgment and the need for national repentance (1:13-14; 2:12-14).

The result of repentance – 2:18-20.

Joel is known as the “Prophet of Pentecost” (2:28-32; Acts 2:14-21).

Amos

Amos dates himself to about 760 BC (1:1). The earthquake (1:1) is also mentioned in Zechariah 14:5 about 200 years later.

Amos is a prophet to the nations – Damascus (1:3-5), Gaza (1:6-8), Tyre (1:9-10), Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15), Moab (2:1-3), Judah (2:4-5), Israel (2:6-16).

A majority of his prophecies are in regard to the “house of Israel” (3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1).

With each nation he wrote, “For three transgressions and for four.” This is not a literal number of sins, but an indication of the fulness of their sin.

While each chapter discusses judgment, there is also a message of hope (5:4-15).

His message was not well received by Israel (7:10-13).

God had been more than fair to His people throughout the years (3:7-8), but her continual refusal to repent was leading to judgment (4:12).

Part of Israel’s judgment was due to her prosperity that led to a life of indulgence and laziness (6:1-6).

There is a distinction made between Israel and Judah (9:8).

The book ends with hope that is fulfilled in Christ (9:11-15). This passage is referenced by James at the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15:12-18).

Obadiah

Obadiah is the prophet against Edom.

Edom was descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob (Gen. 25:19-28; 36:8).

Edom’s sins were pride (v. 3-4), violence against Israel (v. 10-11; Num. 20:14-21), rejoicing over the troubles of others (v. 12-14).

The Bible and pride – Pro. 6:16-19; 16:18; 21:4; 29:23; Rom. 1:30; Jam. 4:6.

Rejoicing over the hurt of others – Pro. 24:17-18; Ps. 35.

Verses 15-18 – Psalm 137:7-9.

Edom was attacked by Babylon in 582 BC, the Maccabees in 130 BC, and finally destroyed by Rome around AD 70.

About Mount Zion...

- As David was establishing his kingdom, he made Zion his royal capital (2 Sam. 5:7; 1 Kg. 8:1; 1 Chr. 11:5-6).
- It was a high hill on the Eastern side of Jerusalem.

- The name became synonymous with Jerusalem.
- In the prophets, it is frequently used to reference Jerusalem in connection with the establishment of God's spiritual government, the church (Isa. 2:2-3; 62:1-2).
- It is found 7 times in the NT and always refers to Jesus and the church (Matt. 21:5; Jn. 12:15; Rom. 9:33; 11:26; Heb. 12:22; 1 Pet. 2:6; Rev. 14:1).

Jonah

Jonah is dated in 2 Kings 14:23-27. His work was done in Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, during the days of Jeroboam II of Israel (786-746 BC).

The message is that Nineveh needed to repent (3:4).

Seven miracles are recorded (1:4, 15, 17; 2:10; 4:6, 7, 8).

The main point of the book is the mercy of God in response to the repentance of man (3:5-10).

The book has been divided as...

- Running from God (1).
- Running to God (2).
- Running with God (3).
- Running into God (4).

Repentance is defined in this book (3:7-10).

Jonah is the only prophet that Jesus identified as a type of Himself (Lk. 11:29-32).

Micah

Micah did his work around 730 BC (1:1). He was a contemporary of Isaiah.

He wrote about God coming in judgment against Israel (1:5).

The cause was Israel's idolatry (1:7).

It was an evil time (2:3).

He predicts Babylonian captivity – 4:10.

Their sins – idolatry (1:7), planned to do evil (2:1; 3:9-11), covetousness and violence (2:2), rejected God's prophets (2:6-7), accepted false prophets (2:11; 3:5-7), hated good (3:2-3),

What God required of His people – 6:6-8.

Messianic prophecies – 2:12-13; 4:1-3; 5:2.

Nahum

A prophet against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria (1:1).

Jonah had prophesied against Nineveh approximately 150 years earlier (2 Kg. 14:23-27).

The fall of Thebes in Egypt (No or No-Amon) mentioned in 3:8 had already occurred in 663 BC and the future fall of Nineveh (2:8-10) occurred in 612 BC.

The God that would judge Nineveh is the same God who loved Israel (1:2-3, 7-8; Ex. 34:5-7).

Romans 11:22

God will “*not acquit the wicked*” (1:3) is a launching pad for the rest of the book.

God’s people could rejoice because they wouldn’t be trampled by Assyria anymore (1:15).

God had used Assyria to punish His people because of their sin (Isa. 10:5-19).

Habakkuk

1:6 helps set a date. *Chaldeans* is a reference to the inhabitants of Babylon. Habakkuk prophesied sometime shortly before 606 BC.

Habakkuk asked questions of God (1:2-3, 12-13) and then wrote that he would wait and watch to see how God would respond (2:1).

It was God Himself who was raising up the Chaldeans as His instrument of judgment (1:5-7). Verse 7 reveals their standard of authority.

2:4 states a principle that was true under the Old Covenant and New (Gal. 3:11).

Habakkuk condemned the sinful attitudes of the wicked with “Woes” (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19).

Chapter 3 is a prayer of the prophet and he spoke of the glory of the Lord.

3:17-19 is a prayer of praise to God, even when things can’t get worse.

Zephaniah

Josiah was the 16th king of Judah and reigned for 31 years (640-609 BC). He was one of the good reformers of Judah (2 Kg. 22-23).

A key phrase is “the day of the Lord” (1:7, 14, 18; 2:2-3).

The sins of the people were idolatry (1:4-6) and complacency (1:12).

God would deal with Judah’s idolatry (2 Kg. 23:3-6).

Chapter 2 addresses the nations surrounding Judah.

The leaders of Judah were corrupt (3:1-4).

God’s furious judgement would lead to some good (3:8-13).

A restoration of the nation is promised (3:18-20).

“A pure language” (3:9) – Nehemiah 13:23-27.

Haggai

Haggai did his work during the Persian Empire, after the Jews returned to the land to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

They were permitted to return by Cyrus (2 Chr. 36:22-23; Isa. 44-45).

Ezra 1-6 is the background of Haggai and his prophecy is around 520 BC.

They returned to the land after the 70 years of Babylonian captivity (606-536 BC).

The Jews laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:10) and then were stopped for 16 years because of opposition (Ezra 4:23-24).

Haggai's message to the Jews was "Consider your ways" (1:5, 7; 2:15, 18).

God's "house" was in ruins while the people's houses were built and finished (1:4).

The response of the people – 1:12-15; Ezra 6:13-15.

Those who saw Solomon's temple were discouraged because the second was not as glorious (2:3; Ezra 3:12-13).

While they were doing the physical work, the people needed to repent and turn to God (2:10-14).

A promise given to the governor of Judah (2:20-23) that is ultimately tied to Christ (Matt. 1:12; Lk. 3:27).

Zechariah

Contemporary with Haggai and they did their work during the rebuilding of the temple (520 BC).

His message is one of repentance (1:2-4).

The first six chapters reveal eight visions given to the prophet. Each vision must be interpreted with the historical setting in mind.

Vision 1 – 1:7-17 – A reassurance that the temple will be rebuilt.

Vision 2 – 1:18-21 – The enemies of God's people will be defeated.

Vision 3 – 2:1-5 – Jerusalem would be restored and spiritual Jerusalem (church) would prosper.

Vision 4 – 3 – The priesthood would be cleansed.

Vision 5 – 4 – Further assurance regarding the temple.

Vision 6 – 5:1-4 – The immoral would be cursed.

Vision 7 – 5:5-11 – Evil would be removed from the land.

Vision 8 – 6:1-8 – God sees all and is in control.

Zechariah is often compared to Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation because of its apocalyptic style. *Apocalyptic* is from the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις that mean “revealing, uncovering.” These books were written during times of great distress for God’s people and give them reassurance of God’s presence and activity.

Zechariah is also compared to Isaiah because it is very Messianic (2:10-13; 3:8; 6:9-15; 8:20-23; 9:9-10; 11:12-13; 12:10-14; 13:1-2; 13:7).

Malachi

The first group of Jews to return from Babylon did so in 536 BC under Zerubbabel, governor of Judah. The temple was rebuilt by 516 BC. Ezra brought a group of people back in 458 BC and restored a respect for the law of God. Nehemiah was governor of Judah around 440 BC. It was during this time that Malachi did his work.

Contextually, “*burden*” refers to a prophetic oracle. How might the word of God be a burden?

The style of Malachi is unique. He uses what is called a “didactic (facts)-dialectic (discussion)” in which an affirmation is made, followed up with a question of objection. The question is answered with a refutation of the objection (1:2-3, 6-7; 2:10-16, 17; 3:7-8, 13-14).

The priesthood was a target of God’s warnings (1:6; 2:1, 7). They had a responsibility to teach the law, but had failed (2:7-9).

Malachi addressed divorce and the marriages to foreign women (2:10-17). The book of Nehemiah records these problems that were also in the priesthood.

Chapters 3-4 warn of judgment coming from God through His messenger, Elijah (Matt. 17:11-13).

There seems to be warnings concerning the destruction of the temple (3:1-3).

Israel was guilty of robbing God (3:8-12) and felt that they were not profiting from serving Him (3:13-15).

Chapter 4 contains a prophecy of Jesus (4:2 with Luke 1:76-78) and John the Baptizer (4:4-6 with Matthew 17:11-13).

Matthew

Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27 show that Matthew was a tax collector (publican) and his name was Levi. Not mentioned after Acts 1.

Matthew begins with the genealogy (1:1-17) and birth of Christ (1:18-25).

“Kingdom” is the emphasis of this account and is used 50 times.

This is the only gospel to use “church” (16:18; 18:17).

Matthew contains the fullest account of the “Sermon on the Mount” (5-7).

Matthew places an emphasis on the parabolic teachings of Christ (13, 18, 20-22, 25).

David is mentioned 17 times in Matthew. This important because of the Messianic OT prophecies pointing to Jesus and the kingdom/church.

There are at least 25 OT prophecies mentioned as being fulfilled in Christ.

There is a heavy emphasis on Jesus' miraculous activities.

Matthew recorded many interactions of Jesus with Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark

Mark is mentioned only eight times in the NT. He was the son of Mary (Acts 12:12), a worker with Barnabas and Saul (Acts 12:25), a source of contention between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41), and a beneficial worker later on (2 Tim. 4:11). A fellow-prisoner (Col. 4:10), fellow-worker (Phile. 24), and Peter's "son" (1 Pet. 5:13).

"Scripture" and "law" is only mentioned 4 times (12:10, 24; 14:49; 15:28).

The book starts with a brief summary of the work of John the Baptizer (1:1-11) and then gets right into the temptation (1:12-13) work of Christ (1:14).

Mark is a gospel of action. He uses a word that is translated as *immediately*, *straightway*, and *forthwith* 42 times. He recorded 18 specific miracles and 3 "many healed" miracles.

Mark recorded only four parables (4:1-34; 12:1-12; 13:28-31).

Luke

Luke is mentioned by name on 3 times in Scripture (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 24). He includes himself as he wrote about Paul's travels (the "We" sections of Acts 16:10-16; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). He was a physician and a fellow traveler and prisoner with Paul.

He was not one of the apostles, but he was inspired to write Luke and Acts.

He refers to Jesus as the "Son of Man" 25 times in his gospel record.

His gospel is historically documented – 1:5; 2:1-3; 3:1.

Luke details the most up to and after the birth of Jesus (1:1-2:7) and his early life (2:8-52).

Instead of being traced to Abraham, which would be significant to Jews, He is traced to Adam and presented as Son of God.

Luke revealed his purpose in writing – 1:1-4.

There are 7 miracles unique to Luke and 16 parables.

John

John was one of the 12 and one of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. 10:3). He is mentioned by name 35 times in the NT. He also wrote 1-3 John and Revelation. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved (21:20-24).

Jesus refers to God as “Father” around 100 times. John’s stated purpose in writing was to prove Jesus to be the Son of God – 20:30-31.

John begins with the eternal nature of Jesus and identifies Jesus as “the Word” (1:1, 14).

John records much about the work of John the Baptizer (1:6-9, 19-36; 3:22-36; 10:40-42).

John, for the purpose of proving the divine nature of Christ, recorded only 7 miracles of Jesus.

- Water to wine (2:1-12).
- Healing of nobleman’s son (4:46-54).
- Healing of lame man (5:1-15).
- Feeding of 5,000 (6:1-14).
- Walked on water (6:15-21).
- Healing of blind man (9:1-12).
- Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44).

John also records the “I Am” statements of Christ...

- Bread of life (6:35).
- Light of the world (8:12).
- I Am (8:58).
- The door of the sheep (10:7).
- Good shepherd (10:11).
- Resurrection and the life (11:25).
- The way, truth, life (14:6).
- True vine (15:1).

Chapters 13-17 are unique to John’s account of the life of Christ.

Acts

Written by Luke (Lk. 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3). Acts picks up where Luke drops off with the ascension of Jesus (Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11). The next event recorded is the replacement of Judas by Matthias (1:12-26).

Acts 2 is the culmination of the church/kingdom and the outpouring of power from the Holy Spirit (2:1-4; 1:8; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:44-49).

Acts could be called “Some of the Acts of Some of the Apostles.” Primarily, we have recorded the work of Peter (2-5, 8-15) and Paul (8-28).

One of the main messages in Acts is the work of the Holy Spirit among the apostles and the early church.

- The outpouring of power (baptism of the Holy Spirit) from the Spirit is seen (2, 10).
- Various communications from the Spirit (8:29; 10:19; 11:12, 28; 16:7; 21:4).
- Various working of miracles (3:1-10).
- How to receive the Holy Spirit is revealed (8:14-19).

Persecution is a major theme in Acts (4-5, 7-9, 12, Paul's missionary journeys).

Issues between Jews and Gentiles are addressed (15).

Acts is the inspired, historical record of the establishment, growth, and organization of the church of Christ (1:8; 2; 8; 13-28).

We see the gospel being preached among Jewish people (God's system) and among those who were of pagan background (17, 19).

Acts reveals what people did in response to the gospel, both positively and negatively.

Romans

Paul was the author (1:1) and Tertius was the amanuensis (16:22).

We do not know by whom or when the Roman church was established. Probably by someone who was present in Acts 2 (v. 10).

Paul's letter to the Roman church is bracketed by the statement "for obedience of faith" (1:5; 16:26). Throughout Romans there is a constant emphasis on obedience (1:5; 2:8; 6:12, 16-17; 10:16; 16:19, 26).

The theme is set out in 1:15-17.

Romans is one of the most misused books in all of the NT. Many use it to teach that salvation comes from "faith alone" (Rom. 4). It is also used to teach that God particularly chooses the saved and the lost (9-11).

One of the main issues dealt with in Romans was the animosity between Jew and Gentile. Paul clearly shows that they all needed the gospel (3). His point to the Jewish readers in Rome was that Abraham was justified by faith before the Law of Moses even existed (4). The Jews were trying to be justified by keeping the Law and that was not possible (3:20).

Romans shows that there is a "form of doctrine" to be obeyed (Rom. 6:17-18).

Chapters 7-8 show the contrast between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ.

Chapters 12-16 deal with fundamental Christian living.

- 12 – A living sacrifice.
- 13 – Civic responsibilities.
- 14:1-15:7 – Matters of conscience.
- 15:8-16:27 – Closing admonitions.

1 Corinthians

Written by Paul around AD 57.

Corinth was a troubled congregation, but they were still God's people (1:2).

- Division (1:10-17; 3:1-17).
- Human wisdom (1:18-2:16).
- Fornication (5; 6:12-20).
- Christians taking Christians to court (6).
- Questions about marriage (7).
- Matters of conscience (8; 10:23-33).
- Charges about Paul and money (9:1-18).
- Falling away (10:1-22).
- Appropriate conduct in society (11:1-16).
- Abuse of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34).
- Problems with spiritual gifts (12-14).
- Denial of a future resurrection (15).

Paul dealt with inspiration (2:6-16) and the truth of his apostolic authority (14:36-37).

2 Corinthians

Written about one year after 1 Corinthians (8:10).

This and Philemon are the most personal and least doctrinal of Paul's letters.

- Chapters 1-7 discuss his concern to hear of their reception and reaction to his first letter from Titus. Chapters 2 and 7 address how they dealt with the man who was committing fornication (1 Cor. 5).
- Chapters 8-9 discuss the collection for needy saints that they were taking up (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This collection is referenced in several NT passages (Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4).
- Chapters 10-13 address the challenges to his apostleship and that they knew the authenticity of his authority. The signs he performed (12:12), the revelations were evidence of his authority (12:7), and the suffering he endured (11:22-33) were all evidence of his apostolic office.

Titus is a main "character" in the book (2:13; 7:6, 13-14; 8:6, 13, 23; 12:18).

Galatians

Written to the churches established on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, Derbe, Iconium.

The theme of the book is 2:16.

Paul was concerned with their acceptance of "another" gospel (1:6-9).

He reminded them of the origin of the message he preached (1:11-2:10).

His rebuke of Peter was a display of his apostolic authority (2:11-21).

A contrast of “the Law” (of Moses) and “the Spirit” (New Covenant) (3-4).

Stand fast in the gospel (5:1-15).

Walk in the Spirit (5:16-26).

Various admonitions (6).

Romans and Galatians studied together gives great insight to the transition from the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ. They have been called “Twin Letters.”

Ephesians

Church established by Paul Acts 18-20.

This church is also referenced in Revelation 2:1-7.

The main theme is “in,” “by,” and “through” Christ. 28 times! Also, “church” and “body” are used 9 times each.

“Grace” appears 12 times (1:2, 6-7; 2:5, 7-8; 3:2, 7-8; 4:7, 29; 6:24).

Another phrase, and unique to Ephesians, is “in the heavenly places” (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).

Chapters 1-3 are very doctrinal. Chapters 4-6 are very practical.

This was a Gentile congregation (2:11-12; 3:1).

The distinction between the Law of Moses and the New Covenant is made (2:11-22).

The gospel can be read and understood (3:1-6).

Spiritual gifts are addressed (4:7-16).

Domestic responsibilities are addressed (5:22-6:9).

Tychicus delivered this letter (6:21-22) and Colossians (4:7-8).

Philippians

This congregation was a result of the Macedonian call – Acts 16:6-12.

Joy/rejoice used 16 times (1:4, 18, 25-26; 2:2, 16, 17, 18, 28; 3:1, 3; 4:1, 4, 10).

A letter of thanksgiving for their fellowship (1:3-5, 7).

Written by Paul from prison (1:16).

Paul’s view of life and death (1:19-24).

He repeatedly addressed their conduct in the world (1:27; 2:1-4, 14-15).

Paul speaks of his coworkers (2:19-30).

He discussed righteousness in connection with the Law of Moses and the Gospel (3:7-11).

The “Book of Life” is mentioned (4:3; Ex. 32:32-33; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19).

Paul talks about the support they had given to him (4:10-19).

Colossians

Don’t know who established this congregation.

Seems Paul had not been there – 1:4, 7-8; 2:1.

Seems to be a Gentile congregation – 1:27.

Closely linked to Philemon – Col. 4:7-9, 17; Phile. 1-2.

Written to address different problems facing the church:

- Judaism – 2:11-17.
- Mysticism – 2:18.
- Asceticism – 2:20-23.
- Dualism/Gnosticism – 2:9.

Because of Gnosticism, “all” is a main theme in Colossians (32 x’s). Gnostic comes from the Greek word γινώσκω and means “I know.” Gnostics claimed to have special knowledge about a variety of things and Christians were being told they needed more knowledge than just the gospel to be saved (1:9-11, 28; 2:2-3).

Colossians and Ephesians are called the “Twin Epistles.”

- Eph. 1:19-23 & Col. 1:15-18.
- Eph. 2:11-15 & Col. 2:11-17.
- Eph. 4:17-32 & Col. 3:5-17.
- Eph. 5:22-6:9 & Col. 3:18-4:1.

1 Thessalonians

Established on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).

Established amidst persecution (Acts 17:5-9; 1 Thes. 2:2).

Seems to be a largely Gentile congregation – 1:9.

A main theme is the return of Christ.

- 1:10 – “wait for His Son from heaven.”
- 2:19 – “at His coming.”
- 3:13 – “at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”
- 4:13-5:4, 24 – “descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”

- Some were under the misconception that He would return soon – 5:1-3.

They were commended for their reception of the word – 2:13.

They are warned of further persecution – 3:3-4.

Paul encouraged them to walk so as to please God – 4:1-8.

The congregation had elders – 5:12-13.

2 Thessalonians

This letter was written within a few months of the first because of their misunderstandings of the coming of Christ. That was the main theme of the first letter. Because of that, some Christians thought that Christ's return was imminent. As such, some of them had even quit working.

Another purpose of the letter was to encourage them during a time of persecution (1:3-6).

The return of Christ covers from 1:7-2:12. It would not come before the apostasy (2:3) and the man of sin was revealed (2:3).

The man of sin: (some think Roman emperors, the Papacy, Jewish High Priest)

- Opposes and exalts himself above God (2:4).
- Sits as God in the temple, showing that he is God (2:4).
- They knew more about this than we do (2:5).
- They knew what was restraining (2:6). We do not.
- The mystery of lawlessness was already at work (2:7).
- The lawless one would be defeated (2:8).
- He would have false miracles (2:9).
- Many would be deceived (2:10-12).
- Those who followed him would do so because they did not love the truth (2:10, 12).

The Thessalonians were admonished to hold true to what Paul taught them, both orally and written (2:15).

3:6-15 deals with those who had become idle because they thought Jesus was returning soon.

1 Timothy

Key passage – 3:14-15.

Introduced to Timothy in Acts 16, at the beginning of Paul's second journey.

He was left in Ephesus with a charge (1:3).

- Doctrine – 1:3-11
- Paul's apostleship – 1:12-17
- Timothy to fight – 1:18-20
- Instruct the church to pray – 2:1-7

- How to pray when assembled – 2:8-15
- Elders – 3:1-7
- Deacons – 3:8-13
- Behavior “in the church” – 3:14-16
- Apostasy – 4:1-11
- Timothy’s personal responsibilities – 4:12-16
- Treatment of fellow-Christians...
 - Older & younger – 5:1-2
 - Widows – 5:3-16
 - Elders – 5:17-25
 - Civil – 6:1-2
- Teach the truth – 6:3-5
- Money – 6:6-10, 17-19
- Timothy’s life – 6:11-16, 20-21

2 Timothy

Main theme – 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Timothy needed some encouragement to do what he was supposed to be doing – 1:6-8.

Timothy needed strength and endurance because of the nature of Christianity (2:1-6).

He was to remind the “elect” of certain things...

- 2:14 – to war over words that are not useful.
- 2:15 – handle the word correctly.
- 2:16-18 – stay away from godless, profane disputes.
- 2:23 – avoid moronic and crude discussions.

A warning about distressing times – 3:1-9. Notice, the distressing times are caused by people!

How Timothy was to conduct himself in contrast – 3:10-4:5.

Personal closing – 4:6-22.

An important contrast in “words” for the preacher...

- Pattern of sound words (1:13), handle true words rightly (2:15), carefully follow doctrine (3:10), inspired, profitable (3:16-17), preach the word (4:2).
- Pointless words (2:14), profane and idle (2:16), cancerous (2:17), foolish and ignorant (2:23), turned to fables (4:3-4).

Titus

A worker with Paul (2 Cor. 2, 7-8, 12; Gal. 2; 2 Tim. 4).

A Gentile – Gal. 2:1-5.

Paul left him in Crete to “set in order things that were wanting and to appoint elders in every city” – 1:5 (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1).

The responsibility of elders (1:10-16).

Sound doctrine in the church (2:1-10).

Responsibility in local work for the preacher (2:15 & 3:1-2, 8, 14).

The kindness, love, mercy, and justification of God (3:3-7).

- A contrast between how man behaved (3:3) and what God has done (3:4-7).
- Salvation does not arise from a human origin. God’s “kindness and love” toward man did not appear because man earned it. We are saved through the “washing of regeneration (literally – a bath of rebirth) and renewing of the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit’s role in salvation – 1 Peter 1:22-25.

There are people that are “heretical” (divisive) and we are told what to do with them (3:10-11).

Philemon

Mentioned by name only in this letter.

Apphia mentioned only here.

Archippus mentioned also in Colossians 4:17.

Onesimus mentioned here and in Colossians 4:9.

Epaphras mentioned here and in Colossians 1:7 and 4:12.

Mark mentioned here and in Colossians 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:13

Aristarchus mentioned here and in Acts 19, 20, 27 and Colossians 4:10.

Demas mentioned here and Colossians 4:14 and 2 Timothy 4:10.

Luke mentioned here and Colossians 4:14 and 2 Timothy 4:11.

Philemon lived in Colosse and the church met in his house (Phile. 2). This letter was probably written with Colossians and was delivered by Tychicus (Col. 4:7-9).

The subject was Onesimus who was a run-away slave of Philemon.

Paul lovingly urges (v. 8-9) Philemon to receive Onesimus back as a brother, and not a slave (v. 15-16).

The New Testament on slavery...

1 Corinthians 7:21-23; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 6:1-2

Slavery existed in the first century because of war captives, financial debt, government slaves, and those who sold themselves into servitude because they were poor. Slavery in the Bible is much broader than the chattel slavery we think of.

Christianity is not a political movement which sets out to overthrow forms of civil government and practices (Rom. 13:1-2).

The principle of God's providence is evident in this letter (v. 15 with Esther 4:13-15).

Paul's appeal to Philemon was out of love for both Philemon and Onesimus (v. 17-22).

Hebrews

This letter is all about the Son (1:1-4) and His covenant.

"Better" is the key word (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). The Greek word means to be different and to excel what it is compared to.

He is "better than the angels" (1:4-2:18). The Hebrews were told they could do better (6:9). The new covenant is a better hope (7:19, 22). Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant (8:6). Jesus' sacrifice is better (9:23). Heaven is better than here (10:34; 11:16, 35). The Christian has a better promise (11:40). The Christian has better blood offered (12:24).

The book was written to Jewish Christians living in Jerusalem right before its destruction in AD 70 (13:10-14).

Jesus is identified as prophet, priest, and king (1:2-3).

That which excels...

- Jesus over the angels (1:4-2:18).
- Jesus' rest over Israel's rest (3:1-4:13).
- Jesus' priesthood over Melchizedek and Levi (4:14-5:11; 6:13-8:6).
- Jesus' covenant over the Mosaic (8:7-13).
- Jesus' tabernacle (church) is over the first and its services (9:1-28).
- Jesus' blood is over the animal's offered (10:1-22).
- Heavenly Jerusalem (church) is over Jerusalem (12:18-29).

5:12-6:12 – An exhortation to the Hebrews.

10:23-39 – A warning that they should not "draw back unto perdition."

11:1-12:17 – How to "live by faith."

13 – A variety of exhortations. A special emphasis on the elders (13:7, 17, 24).

James

James is the gospel of faith + works = salvation.

It is also the gospel of common sense.

Faith/believe is used 19 times. Works is used 18 times.

Written to Jewish Christians who had been scattered because of persecution (1:1).

Outline of James...

1. Temptation and the Christian response (1:1-18).
2. Hearing and doing the word (1:19-27).
3. Favoritism in the church (2:1-13).
4. Faith and works (2:14-26).
5. The tongue (3:1-12).
6. Earthly wisdom versus heavenly wisdom (3:13-18).
7. Worldliness (4:1-12).
8. Plans without God (4:13-17).
9. Warning to the rich (5:1-6).
10. Endurance (5:7-12).
11. Prayer and restoration (5:13-20).

1 Peter

Written to the “strangers scattered” (KJV), “pilgrims of the dispersion” (NKJ).

Dispersion (διὰ – through; σπείρω – to sow or scatter). This word is used three times in the NT. (Jn. 7:35; Jam. 1:1). Seems to be a reference to Jewish Christians who had been scattered because of persecution.

The book is about enduring persecution with a “genuine faith” (1:6-9; 4:12-16).

To endure, you must “pull yourselves together” (1:13), obey (1:14), and be holy (1:15-16).

Peter quotes the OT:

- 1:16 – Leviticus 19:2
- 1:24-25 – Isaiah 40:6-8
- 2:6 – Isaiah 28:16
- 2:7 – Psalm 118:22
- 2:8 – Isaiah 8:14
- 2:10 – Hosea 1:9
- 2:22 – Isaiah 53:9
- 3:10-12 – Psalm 34:12-16
- 3:14 – Isaiah 8:12
- 4:8 – Proverbs 10:12
- 4:18 – Proverbs 11:31
- 5:5 – Proverbs 3:34

A perfect example of Luke 24:44.

Also, the prophets (1:10), priesthood (2:5), Abraham and Sarah (3:6), and Noah (3:20) are all mentioned.

Domestic responsibilities are addressed – 2:13-3:12.

Suffering should not be because of wickedness – 3:13-17; 4:12-16.

Elders are addressed (5:1-4). Elders (πρεσβύτερος) are shepherds (ποιμήν) are overseers (ἐπίσκοπος). Acts 20:17 & 28 shows the same thing. There is no distinction in these “offices” in the church.

2 Peter

Simon (Greek = hearing). Peter (Greek = stone). Cephas (Syriac = stone).

The emphasis in the first letter was suffering and hope. The purpose of the second is knowledge in the face of false teachers.

Know – 1:2-3, 5-6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 20; 2:9, 20-21; 3:3, 17-18.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the rest of the book. It lays out the importance of proper knowledge (9 times), partaking of the divine nature (v. 4), adding the Christian graces (v. 5-11), and the source of proper knowledge (v. 12-21).

Chapter 2 warns of false teachers (v. 1-3), examples of God’s activity toward them (v. 4-11), and the character and conduct of false teachers (v. 12-22).

Chapter 3 tells the purpose of the second letter (v. 1-2).

There were some who denied the return of Christ out of willful forgetfulness (v. 5).

3:10-13 reveals the nature of and events to happen when Christ returns.

3:14-18 contains instructions in view of the fact that Christ will return.

1 John

Key words – love (46), know (40), truth (18)

Key thought – Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who came in the flesh – 2:22; 4:1-3; 5:20.

John was addressing the false doctrine known as Gnosticism. There were two groups of Gnostics. Docetic gnostics said that Christ’s body was not human and, as such, His suffering was only apparent. Cerinthian gnostics taught that Jesus and Christ were different beings. Cerinthus taught that Jesus accepted the Christ at His baptism and the Christ left Jesus before His suffering.

This letter begins in the same manner as his gospel (Jn. 1:1-5).

This book elevates knowledge and confidence in one’s relationship with God (2:3-6; 3:7-9).

He addresses all “ages” of Christians (2:12-14).

This is one of only two book which mentions antichrist, which is only mentioned four times in the Bible (2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7).

There is a clear distinction made between children of God and children of the devil (3:10).

Love is pictured as activity, not a feeling (3:16-18).

God is “in” the Christian (4:12-16).

This is the book that tells us that “faith is the victory” (5:4).

The doctrine of the “trinity” is established in this book (5:6-8).

2 John

Key words – truth (5), love (4), and commandment (4).

The command to walk in love is identical to that in 1 John (3:11; 4:12).

The necessity of walking in love toward one another is based in the reality of deceivers in the world (v. 7-8).

They (we) are to abide “in the doctrine of Christ” (v. 9).

They (we) are not to participate with those who do not (v. 10-11).

3 John

Key words – truth (6) and love (3).

Verse 2 – Christians should want what is best for others. A Christian will not have a spiteful and resentful heart.

Love is equated with doing (v. 5-8).

Love of self is also equated with doing (v. 9-10).

The choice between doing good and doing evil is evident (v. 11).

Jude

Stated purpose – v. 3-4.

Contend = to fight in reference to something.

Verses 5-7 contain examples of those from the past who suffered the wrath of God...

- Israelites
- Angels
- Sodom and Gomorrah

Verses 8-19 discuss the character and conduct of the false teachers who crept into the church (v. 4).

They are compared to...

- Cain (Gen. 4).
- Balaam (Num. 22-25).

- Korah (Num. 16).

The Christians are to build themselves up and keep themselves in the love of God (v. 20-21).

About Enoch...

- The seventh from Adam (Gen. 5:1-21).
- A prophet.
- There is a pseudepigraphal writing (108 chapters) called First Enoch that was written at some time between 200 BC and AD 100. It appears to be a compilation of several Jewish documents and is not included in any canon of Scripture.
- Jude, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, states that Enoch was a prophet who spoke of God's judgment against the ungodly.

Revelation

The most important thing to grasp about Revelation in the timeframe! Too many people look at this book as if it is a prediction for future, "end-time" events.

Revelation 1:1-3 and 22:10

It is also vital to understand who the recipients of this book were – 1:4, 11; 2-3.

A student of Revelation must also understand the literary genre. This is a book of signs to the seven churches of Asia, regarding things that must "shortly come to pass."

Chapter 1 introduces us to the nature, timing, and some of the signs of the book.

Chapters 2-3 are the letters to the seven churches addressing their current situation and needs.

Chapters 4-5 reveal to the seven churches that God has not abdicated His throne and that His purpose will be accomplished. A revelation from God that is sealed and only the Lamb is worthy to reveal the contents.

Chapter 6 – seals 1-6 show that Jesus will be victorious (6:1-2), but that there will be suffering (6:3-17).

Chapter 7 shows that God has "marked" His people on earth (7:1-8) and in heaven (7:9-17).

Chapters 8-9 contain the opening of the seventh seal from chapter 5 in which there are seven angels, each with a trumpet (announcement). Trumpets 1-6 are in 8:7-9:21.

Chapter 10 – John instructed to eat a little book (Eze. 2:9-3:3). A bittersweet prophecy.

Chapter 11 pictures God's cause being successful (1-6) and then it appears as if God's cause begins to fail (7-10). The seventh trumpet is then sounded (11-19).

Chapter 12 shows the persecution of God's purpose (a pregnant woman) by the dragon (Satan). Satan is ultimately defeated. The birth of the child (Christ) could not be stopped and then Satan persecutes the woman (God's people).

Chapter 13 shows that there are two beasts who received their power from the dragon (13:2, 12). 13:1-10 is imperial power for persecution. 13:11-18 is false religion used by the dragon for persecution.

Chapter 14 shows the 144,000 (the redeemed) rejoicing with the Lamb and the wrath of God against His enemies.

Chapters 15-16 reveal seven angels, each with a bowl of the wrath of God (16:1).

Chapters 17-19 show the fall of “the great city” which is also called “the great harlot that corrupted the earth” (17:18; 19:2).

Chapters 20-22 show the Christ and His cause reigning and the glory of the new heavens and new earth.