**Pentateuch (first 5 books)**

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

**Exodus**

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

**Leviticus**

God gives Israel instructions for how to worship Him.

**Numbers**

Israel fails to trust and obey God, and wanders in the wilderness for 40 years.

**Deuteronomy**

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

**History books**

**Joshua**

Joshua (Israel’s new leader) leads Israel to conquer the Promised land, then parcels out territories to the twelve tribes of Israel

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**Author:**Nobody knows

**Judges**

Israel enters a cycle of turning from God, falling captive to oppressive nations, calling out to God, and being rescued by leaders God sends their way (called “judges”).

**Ruth**

Two widows lose everything and find hope in Israel—which leads to the birth of the future King David.

**1 Samuel**

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

**2 Samuel**

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

**1 Kings**

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

**2 Kings**

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

**1 Chronicles**

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

**2 Chronicles**

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

**Ezra**

The Israelites rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and a scribe named Ezra teaches the people to once again obey God’s laws.

**Nehemiah**

The city of Jerusalem is in bad shape, so Nehemiah rebuilds the wall around the city.

**Esther**

Someone hatches a genocidal plot to bring about Israel’s extinction, and Esther must face the emperor to ask for help.

**Books of Poetry and Wisdom in the Old Testament**

**Job**

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

**Psalms**

A collection of 150 songs that Israel sang to God (and to each other)—kind of like a hymnal for the ancient Israelites.

**Proverbs**

A collection of sayings written to help people make wise decisions that bring about justice.

**Ecclesiastes**

A philosophical exploration of the meaning of life—with a surprisingly nihilistic tone for the Bible.

**Song of Solomon** (Song of Songs)

A love song (or collection of love songs) celebrating love, desire, and marriage. A little spicy for the young ones.

**Books of prophecy in the Old Testament**

**Isaiah**

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

**Jeremiah**

God sends a prophet to warn Israel about the coming Babylonian captivity, but the people don’t take the news very well.

**Lamentations**

A collection of dirges lamenting the fall of Jerusalem after the Babylonian attacks.

**Ezekiel**

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

**Daniel**

Daniel becomes a high-ranking wise man in the Babylonian and Persian empires, and has prophetic visions concerning Israel’s future.

**Hosea**

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

**Joel**

God sends a plague of locusts to Judge Israel, but his judgment on the surrounding nations is coming, too.

**Amos**

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

**Obadiah**

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

**Jonah**

A disobedient prophet runs from God, is swallowed by a great fish, and then preaches God’s message to the city of Nineveh. The dangers of racism and nationalism are explored.

**Micah**

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

**Nahum**

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

**Habakkuk**

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

**Zephaniah**

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

**Haggai**

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

**Zechariah**

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

**Malachi**

God has been faithful to Israel, but they continue to live disconnected from him—so God sends Malachi to preach repentence.

**New Testament books of the Bible**

**Gospels and Acts**

**Matthew**

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

**Mark**

This brief account of Jesus’ earthly ministry highlights Jesus’ authority and servanthood.

**Luke**

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

**John**

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

**Acts**

Luke’s sequel, Jesus returns to the Father, the Holy Spirit comes to the church, and the gospel of Jesus spreads throughout the world.

**Paul’s letters**

**Romans**

Paul summarizes how the gospel of Jesus works in a letter to the churches at Rome, where he plans to visit.

**1 Corinthians**[books-of-the-bible-1-corinthians](https://overviewbible.com/1-corinthians)

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

**2 Corinthians**

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

**Galatians**[books-of-the-bible-galatians](https://overviewbible.com/galatians)

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

**Ephesians**[books-of-the-bible-ephesians](https://overviewbible.com/ephesians)

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

**Philippians**

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

**Colossians**

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

**1 Thessalonians**

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

**2 Thessalonians**

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

**1 Timothy**

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

**2 Timothy**

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

**Titus**

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

**Philemon**

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

**Other letters**

**Hebrews**

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

**James**

A letter telling Christians to live in ways that demonstrate their faith in action.

**1 Peter**

Peter writes to Christians who are being persecuted, encouraging them to testify to the truth and live accordingly.

**2 Peter**

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

**1 John**

John writes a letter to Christians about keeping Jesus’ commands, loving one another, and important things they should know.

**2 John**

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

**3 John**

An even shorter letter about Christian fellowship.

**Jude**

A letter encouraging Christians to contend for the faith, even though ungodly persons have crept in unnoticed.

**Revelation**

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