

BIBLE INTRODUCTION #1

OLD TESTAMENT: LAW AND HISTORY

II TIMOTHY 3:16-17

“All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

DIVISIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT⁴

LAW ¹	GENESIS-DEUTERONOMY
HISTORY ¹	JOSHUA-ESTHER
POETRY ²	JOB-SONG OF SOLOMON
MAJOR PROPHETS ²	ISAIAH-DANIEL
MINOR PROPHETS ³	HOSEA-MALACHI

¹This chart ²Chart 2 ³Chart 3 ⁴New Testament charts 4-6

BOOKS OF THE LAW, ALSO CALLED THE BOOKS OF MOSES, THE PENTATEUCH, OR THE TORAH

GENESIS (HEB. “IN THE BEGINNING”)

- Author: Moses (Nehemiah 8:1; Deuteronomy 31:9)
- From: The wilderness
- Date: Late 1400s B.C.
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose:
 - To show the history of the Jews from Creation to the death of Joseph
 - To introduce the scheme of redemption (3:15)
 - To show that God had a chosen family—Abraham’s
- Keys:
 - Word: Beginning
 - Verse: 3:15 (First Messianic prophecy)
 - Chapter: 1 (Creation)
- Lessons:
 - God is Creator of all (1)
 - Marriage was instituted by God (2:18-25; cf. Matthew 19:4-6)
 - Sin has deadly effects (3:1-23; cf. Romans 6:23)
- Miscellaneous:
 - Genesis covers a greater period of time than any other book—the least amount of time that it could cover would be about 2500 years
 - It is notable that the existence of God is taken to be understood—Moses saw no reason for argumentation to support His existence

EXODUS (HEB. “AND THESE ARE THE NAMES”; GR. “A WAY OUT”)

- Author: Moses (Nehemiah 8:1; Deuteronomy 31:9)
- From: The wilderness
- Date: Late 1400s B.C.
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose:
 - To show the history of the Jews from the entry into Egypt through the giving of the Law
 - To show the chosen family become the chosen people—Israel
- Keys:
 - Words: Blood, Delivered
 - Phrase: “Let my people go”

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BOOKS OF THE LAW (continued)

- Verse: 3:8 (The Promised Land)
- Chapter: 20 (The Ten Commandments)
- Lessons:
 - God hears the cries of His people (2:23)
 - God does not accept excuses (3-4)
 - God is greater than man’s gods (12:12)
 - Godly leaders should be supported (17:10-13)
 - God is not worshipped with men’s hands (32:1-10; cf. Acts 17:24-25, 29; Romans 1:20-23)
 - All of God’s commands are important—even the intricate ones (35-40)

LEVITICUS (HEB. “AND HE CALLED”)

- Author: Moses (Nehemiah 8:1; Deuteronomy 31:9)
- From: The wilderness
- Date: Late 1400s B.C.
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To detail the offering of sacrifices and consecration of priests
- Keys:
 - Words: Holy, Offer, Blood
 - Phrase: “Sweet savour”
 - Verse: 7:37 (List of offerings)
- Lessons:
 - God’s commands are serious (10:1-2)
 - God delights in “sweet savour[s]” which man may view as repulsive (cf. Isaiah 55:8)
 - Life is in the blood (17:11)
 - God is holy and expects holiness (19:2; cf. I Peter 1:15-16)
- Miscellaneous: The Levites took the role of the firstborn in being dedicated to God (Numbers 3:12-13; Exodus 13:2)

NUMBERS (HEB. “IN THE WILDERNESS”)

- Author: Moses (Nehemiah 8:1; Deuteronomy 31:9)
- From: The wilderness
- Date: Late 1400s B.C.
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide a history of the wilderness wandering
- Keys:
 - Words: Work, Serve, War
 - Verse: 14:33 (Duration of wandering)
 - Passage: 6:22-27 (The blessing of the Children of Israel)
 - Chapter: 35 (The cities of refuge)
- Lessons:
 - Faithlessness breeds fearfulness (13-14)
 - God will be glorified (14:21)
 - Rebellion shall not be tolerated (16-17)
 - For salvation, one must look to safety (21:6-9)

DEUTERONOMY (HEB. “REPETITION OF THE LAW” OR “THESE BE THE WORDS”; GR. “SECOND LAW”)

- Author: Moses (31:9; Nehemiah 8:1) and, perhaps, Joshua
- From: Moab (1:5)

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OLD TESTAMENT: LAW AND HISTORY

BOOKS OF THE LAW (DEUTERONOMY continued)

- Date: Around 1400 B.C., after Moses' death (34:10-12)
- Audience: The Israelites who were about to enter the Promised Land
- Purpose: To prepare the Israelites for their entry into Canaan
- Keys:
 - Words: Remember, Love
 - Phrase: "Love the Lord thy God"
 - Verses: 17:18 (A copy of the law for the king)
 - Chapters: 27-28 (Curses and blessings)
- Lessons:
 - The lasting reward is for those with pure hearts and just actions (5:29)
 - The Lord requires things of man (10:12-13)
 - The secrets of God are not man's concern (29:29)
 - Man chooses his fate (30:19-20)
- Miscellaneous: When tempted, Jesus quoted 8:3; 6:16,13 (Matthew 4:4,7,10)

BOOKS OF HISTORY

JOSHUA (HEB. "THE BOOK OF JOSHUA" OR "THE FIRST BOOK OF THE PROPHETS")

- Author: Joshua (24:26)
- From: Probably Shechem (24:1,25,32) in Canaan
- Date: Early 1300s B.C., after the entry into Canaan
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide a history of the entry into Canaan
- Keys:
 - Words: Courage, Promise, Rest, Fear
 - Phrase: "Be strong and of a good courage"
 - Verse: 21:43 (The Lord gave the land)
 - Chapters: 23-24 (Joshua's charge)
- Lessons:
 - God keeps His promises (1:1-3; 21:45; 23:5)
 - God will neither fail nor forsake His faithful (1:5)
 - Sin affects others (7)
 - The Lord fights for His faithful (8:1; 10:25; 23:10)
 - All of God's commands are important (23:6)
 - Man must choose to serve God (24:14-15)

JUDGES

- Author: Probably Samuel
- From: Possibly important Shiloh (I Samuel 4:3) in Canaan
- Date: Early to mid 1000s, in the time of Samuel but before monarchy
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide a history of the period of the judges
- Keys:
 - Words: Judged, Delivered, Oppressed
 - Phrase: "Right in his own eyes"
 - Verse: 21:25 (Man his own authority)
 - Passage: 2:16-19 (The cycle introduced)
 - Chapter: 2 (Reason for the Lord's anger)
- Lessons:
 - Man must keep his side of covenants (2:20-22)
 - Compromise is dangerous (3:5-8)
 - God does not want the fearful in His army (7:3; cf. Revelation 21:8)
 - God does not rely upon great numbers (7:7; cf. I Samuel 14:6)

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BOOKS OF HISTORY (continued)

- Man must not be his own authority (21:25; cf. Jeremiah 10:23)
- Miscellaneous: While the exact number of years is debated, Judges covers around three centuries in which there were thirteen judges and seven cycles of sin/oppression/repentance/deliverance/peace

RUTH

- Author: Possibly Samuel
- From: Possibly from Shiloh or Bethlehem in Canaan
- Date: Late 1000s to early 900s, for David is noteworthy (4:17,22)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To memorialize a good event from a bad time
- Keys:
 - Word: Kinsman
 - Verse: 4:10 (Boaz' purchase of Ruth)
 - Passage: 1:16-17 (Ruth's commitment to Naomi)
 - Chapter: 4 (Redemption)
- Lessons:
 - Rewards of God outweigh costs of obedience (2:11-12)
 - The Lord blesses the virtuous (3:11-12)
 - God's Will often involves faithful women (4:17; cf. Matthew 1:5)
- Miscellaneous: Among the Jews, Ruth was read at Pentecost

I SAMUEL (HEB. "SAMUEL" OR "I KINGS"; GR. "I KINGDOMS"; LAT. "I KINGS")

- Author: Perhaps Nathan or Gad (I Chronicles 29:29), conceivably Jeremiah or Ezra; many attribute to Samuel in spite of 27:6
- From: Possibly Shiloh or Jerusalem in Canaan
- Date: Late 900s or after, for the kingdom division of 931 B.C. evidently had occurred (27:6)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide an account of the history leading to and into the kingdom period
- Keys:
 - Words: King, Kingdom
 - Verse: 8:7 (God was rejected)
 - Chapters: 3 (Call of Samuel), 8 (A king for Israel), 15 (Rejection of Saul)
- Lessons:
 - God answers the prayer of the righteous (1:27; cf. James 5:16)
 - One is responsible for the spiritual rearing of his children (2:29; 3:13)
 - God rewards humility (15:17; cf. James 4:10)
 - To obey is better than sacrifice (15:22)
 - What impresses God may not impress man (16:7)
 - Even the young can serve God effectively (17)
 - There is great value in friendship (18:1-4)
 - Even bad leaders are to receive respect (24:6; Romans 13:1-4; I Timothy 2:1-2)

II SAMUEL (HEB. "SAMUEL" OR "I KINGS"; GR. "II KINGDOMS"; LAT. "II KINGS")

- Author: Perhaps Nathan or Gad (I Chronicles 29:29), conceivably Jeremiah or Ezra; many attribute to Samuel in spite of I Samuel 27:6
- From: Possibly Shiloh or Jerusalem in Canaan

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OLD TESTAMENT: LAW AND HISTORY

BOOKS OF HISTORY (II Samuel continued)

- Date: Late 900s or after, for the kingdom division of 931 B.C. evidently had occurred (I Samuel 27:6)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide a history of the heart of David's reign
- Keys:
 - Word: King
 - Verse: 24:24 (David's heart)
 - Passage: 7:12-13 (David's kingdom established)
 - Chapters: 11 (David's sins), (Sin, punishment, and sacrifice)
- Lessons:
 - The righteous mourn even the loss of their enemies (1:17)
 - A just end does not justify an unjust means (6:6-7)
 - Even the righteous can falter (11)
 - There is a future life (12:23)
 - The Lord's Will be done (15:24-26)
 - The Lord rewards righteousness (22:21-25)
- Miscellaneous: The threshingfloor of Araunah, Ornan in I Chronicles 21:15-28, became the location of the temple and altar (I Chronicles 22:1)

I KINGS (HEB. "KINGS" OR "II KINGS"; GR. "III KINGDOMS"; LAT. "III KINGS")

- Author: Probably Jeremiah (compare II Kings 24-25 with Jeremiah 39-42,52), possibly Ezra
- From: Probably Canaan, perhaps Egypt (Jeremiah 43)
- Date: Early to mid 500s, after the destruction of Jerusalem (II Kings 25)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide a history from the end of David's reign into the reigns of Jehoram of Judah and Ahaziah of Israel
- Keys:
 - Word: Prophet
 - Phrases: "Did evil in the sight of the Lord," "In the way/sins of Jeroboam"
 - Verses: 11:11 (The kingdom to be rent), 17:24 (The purpose of miracles), 18:21 (How long?)
 - Passages: 3:5-15 (Solomon's vision), 9:4-5 (How to keep the kingdom)
 - Chapters: 12 (Division and Jeroboam's Innovations); 18 (Confrontation on Mount Carmel)
- Lessons:
 - God grants wisdom (3:12; cf. James 1:5)
 - There is wise counsel in age (12:6-7,13)
 - God is no god; He is *the* God (18:37-39)
 - The righteous are not alone (19:18)
- Miscellaneous: 1-11 concern the united kingdom of Israel, while 12-22 concern the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel

II KINGS (HEB. "KINGS" OR "II KINGS"; GR. "IV KINGDOMS"; LAT. "IV KINGS")

- Author: Probably Jeremiah (compare 24-25 with Jeremiah 39-42,52), possibly Ezra
- From: Probably Canaan, perhaps Egypt (Jeremiah 43)
- Date: Early to mid 500s, after the destruction of Jerusalem (25)
- Audience: The Israelites

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BOOKS OF HISTORY (continued)

- Purpose: To continue history from the reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah through the falls of Israel and Judah
- Keys:
 - Words: Anger, Destroy
 - Phrase: "Evil in the sight of the Lord"
 - Verse: 23:25 (Tribute to Josiah)
 - Passages: 10:18-28 (Destruction of Baal worship), 17:24-41 (Origin of the Samaritans)
 - Chapter: 19 (Jerusalem's salvation)
- Lessons:
 - Disrespect deserves punishment (2:23-24)
 - Faith is rewarded after obedience (5:1-14)
 - There is no fruit without root (19:30)
 - One can ask for trouble (20:15-18)
 - One cannot argue with righteous judgment (20:19)
 - God hears the humble (22:9)
- Miscellaneous: Studying through the books of I and II Kings will reveal nine dynasties in Israel, but only one in Judah as was necessary for the Lord to come of and be a king of that lineage (I Kings 2:33; I Kings 9:5; Isaiah 9:7; Matthew 1:6-16; Luke 1:32)

I CHRONICLES (HEB. "WORDS" OR "ACTS OF THE DAYS"; GR. "THE THINGS UNTOLD" OR "OMITTED")

- Author: Probably Ezra
- From: Probably Jerusalem in Canaan
- Date: Middle to late 400s, apparently six generations after Zerubbabel (3:19-24)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To give a supplementary history from Creation into Solomon's reign
- Keys:
 - Words: Covenant, Seek, Son
 - Verses: 3:4; 29:27 (David's reign), 17:14 (David's kingdom and throne established forever); 29:30 (David's influence)
 - Passage: 10:12-14 (Why Saul died)
 - Chapter: 17 (God and David)
- Lessons:
 - Glory is due God (16:7-36)
 - Parents should prepare for their children's success (22:2-5)
 - All belongs to God (29:11-12,16)
 - God tries the heart (29:17)
- Miscellaneous: Originally, I and II Chronicles were one book

II CHRONICLES (HEB. "WORDS" OR "ACTS OF THE DAYS"; GR. "THE THINGS UNTOLD" OR "OMITTED")

- Author: Probably Ezra
- From: Probably Jerusalem in Canaan
- Date: Middle to late 400s, apparently six generations after Zerubbabel (I Chronicles 3:19-24)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To give a supplementary history, especially of Judah, from Solomon's reign to Cyrus' edict
- Keys:
 - Words: Covenant, Seek, Transgressed, Destroyed
 - Verses: 15:3 (Israel without), 36:16 (No remedy)

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OLD TESTAMENT: LAW AND HISTORY

BOOKS OF HISTORY (II Chronicles continued)

- Chapter: 36 (Judah and Jerusalem's fall and Cyrus' edict)
- Lessons:
 - God's blessings are conditional (7:14,17-18)
 - Do not fight against God (13:12)
 - God is with those who are with Him (15:2)
 - God sees all (16:9)
 - The heart must be prepared to seek God (30:19)
- Miscellaneous: Divided Israel had no good kings, while Judah had a mixture of some bad, several good, and one—Josiah—great!

EZRA

- Author: Ezra
- From: Almost certainly Jerusalem in Canaan
- Date: Middle to late 400s B.C., perhaps around the time Nehemiah was writing (Nehemiah 8:9; 12:26)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To give a history of the first (Zerubbabel's beginning in 536 B.C.) and second (Ezra's beginning in 457 B.C.) returns from captivity
- Keys:
 - Words: Law, Decree
 - Verses: 7:9 (Ezra's return), 7:10 (Ezra's preparation)
 - Passage: Cyrus' edict (1:1-4)
 - Chapter: 1 (Cyrus' edict and gift)
- Lessons:
 - God's prophecies come to pass (1:1-4; cf. Jeremiah 29:14; Isaiah 44:28)
 - The ten tribes were never "lost" (2:70; 7:7; 8:29,35)
 - That which rightly belongs to one should be no other's (1:7-11)
 - God works providentially (7:9)
 - Obedience begins in the heart (7:10)
- Miscellaneous: At times, Ezra and Nehemiah have been considered one book, even paired with Chronicles

NEHEMIAH

- Author: Nehemiah (1:1)

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BOOKS OF HISTORY (continued)

- From: Probably Jerusalem in Canaan, perhaps Susa (Shushan) in Persia
- Date: Late 400s B.C., at least twelve years after Nehemiah's first return in 444 B.C. (compare 1:1,13:6)
- Audience: The Israelites
- Purpose: To provide a history from Nehemiah's return to the end of the period of Old Testament inspiration
- Keys:
 - Words: Build, Repaired, Work
 - Verses: 4:6 (A mind to work), 13:24 (Language of Ashdod); 13:31 (Nehemiah's conclusion)
 - Chapter: 1 (Nehemiah's prayer)
- Lessons:
 - God expects man to do what he can (2:17-18)
 - Defend where you are attacked (4:20; cf. Acts 2:38)
 - God fights for His people (4:20)
 - Do not compromise (6:3)
 - What a preacher should do (8:8)
 - Even God's beloved can sin (13:26)

ESTHER

- Author: Possibly Ezra, Nehemiah, or Mordecai
- From: Probably Susa (Shushan) in Persia
- Date: Mid 400s B.C., after Ahasuerus' reign which ended in 465 B.C.
- Audience: The Israelites (Esther 9:29-32)
- Purpose: To show God's providential care of His people
- Keys:
 - Word: Decree, Request
 - Verses: 4:11 (Extending the scepter), 4:16 (Esther's courage)
 - Passage: 8:15-17 (Great rejoicing)
 - Chapter: 8 (The Jews' defense)
- Lessons:
 - God works providentially (4:14)
 - Must be willing to sacrifice self to serve God (4:16; cf. Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14)
 - The wicked will ultimately fail (7:10; 8:7)
- Miscellaneous: It is interesting that Esther is known by her Persian name, not by her Hebrew name Hadassah

HEBREWS 4:12

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

HEBREWS 1:1

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ..."

II PETER 1:20-21

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

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