

# Introduction to the Bible

A good summary / survey of the Bible is difficult to achieve. The Bible is comprised of 2 testaments, 66 different books, 1,189 chapters, 31,173 verses, and 773,692 words. The different books of the Bible cover different topics and were addressed to different audiences. The books of the Bible were written by approximately 40 different men over a period of approximately 1,500 years. A summary / survey of the entire Bible is therefore a major undertaking.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit was the "inspiring" author of the Bible. God "breathed out" His Word and used the prophets and apostles to write His Word down ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [2 Peter 1:21](#)). Further, all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ have the Holy Spirit indwelling them ([Romans 8:9](#); [1 Corinthians 12:13](#)). The Holy Spirit desires to help us to understand the Bible ([1 Corinthians 2:10-16](#)).

The purpose of our Bible summary / survey section is to give a basic background of each book of the Bible. For each book of the Bible, the author, date of writing, purpose of writing, key verses, and a brief summary will be given. We sincerely hope that our Bible summary / survey section will help you to understand the Bible better, and will encourage you to study the Bible in a more in-depth manner.

Here are quick summaries of the 66 books of the Bible: we will then Continue with full summaries next.

## Old Testament:

**Genesis** — God creates the universe and fashions humans in His own image and places them in a perfect environment. The humans rebel against God and lose their paradise. The rebellion gets so bad that God wipes out humanity with a flood, but He graciously preserves Noah and his family. Later, God chooses and blesses the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (or Israel) and promises them a land for their many descendants. Through this family God plans to bring a Savior to reconcile the sinful world to Himself.

**Exodus** — The children of Israel, now living in Egypt, are forced into slavery. God prepares an Israelite named Moses to lead the people to freedom. The king is loath to let the slaves go, so God sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians. Moses leads the Israelites through the Red Sea, which God miraculously parts for them, and to Mt. Sinai. Camped at Sinai, the Israelites receive the Law of God, including the Ten Commandments. The Law is the basis of a covenant between God and people He has rescued, with promised blessings for obedience. The people promise to uphold the covenant.

**Leviticus** — In the Law, God establishes a sacrificial system to atone for sins and a series of

festivals for Israel to observe as days of worship. God gives Moses plans for a tabernacle, a tent where the sacrifices can be offered and God will meet with His people. God specifies that the rituals and ceremonies of the tabernacle are to be overseen by the family of Aaron, Moses' brother.

**Numbers** — The Israelites arrive at the border of Canaan, the land God had earlier promised to Abraham. But the people following Moses refuse to enter the land, due to their lack of faith and their fear of Canaan's inhabitants. As a judgment, God consigns the Israelites to wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, until the unbelieving generation passes away and a new generation takes their place. God sustains His rebellious people with miraculous provisions throughout their time in the wilderness.

**Deuteronomy** — The new generation of Israelites is now ready to take possession of the Promised Land. Moses gives a series of final speeches, in which he reiterates the Law of God and promises that one day God will send another Prophet reminiscent of the power and mission of Moses. Moses dies in Moab.

**Joshua** — Moses' successor, Joshua, leads the children of Israel across the Jordan River (parted miraculously by God) and into Canaan. God overthrows the city of Jericho by knocking its walls down. Joshua leads the people in a successful campaign to conquer the whole of Canaan. With a few exceptions, the Israelites remain faithful to their promise to keep their covenant with God, and God blesses them with military victories. After the land is subdued, the Israelites divide Canaan into separate territories, giving each of the tribes of Israel a lasting inheritance.

**Judges** — Joshua dies, and, almost immediately, the people begin to turn away from the God who had blessed them. Rather than driving out all the land's inhabitants, they allow some of the Canaanites to survive, and the Israelites begin to worship the gods of the Canaanites. True to the terms of the covenant, God sends enemies to oppress His people. The suffering they endure causes them to repent, and God responds by sending leaders to rally the people and defeat the enemies, bringing peace to the land again. This cycle is repeated several times over a span of about 300 years.

**Ruth** — During the time of the judges, a famine strikes the land, and a man of Bethlehem takes his family out of Israel to live in Moab. There, he and his two sons die. His widow, Naomi, returns to Israel along with one of her daughters-in-law, a Moabitess named Ruth. Back in Bethlehem, the two women face hardship, and Ruth gathers what food she can by gleaning in a barley field owned by a man named Boaz. Ruth is noticed by Boaz, and he gives her extra help. Since Boaz is related to Naomi's late husband, he has the legal opportunity to redeem the family property and raise up an heir in the name of the deceased. Ruth asks Boaz to do just that, and Boaz agrees. He marries Ruth and purchases the property that had belonged to Naomi. Boaz and Ruth become the great-grandparents of Israel's greatest king, David.

**1 Samuel** — In answer to prayer, Samuel is born to a barren woman, who then dedicates her young son to the tabernacle. Samuel is raised by the judge and high priest, Eli. Early on, Samuel begins to receive messages from God and becomes known as a prophet. After Eli's death, Samuel becomes Israel's final judge. The people demand a king to make them more like other nations. Samuel advises against it, but the Lord directs Samuel to grant their request. Samuel anoints Saul as the first king. Saul starts out well, but he soon begins to act in pride and ignore God's commands. God rejects Saul as king and instructs Samuel to anoint another person to take Saul's place: that person is David, chosen while still a youth. David becomes famous in Israel for slaying the Philistine warrior Goliath, and Saul grows jealous to the point of madness. The king begins to pursue David, whose life is in constant danger as he takes refuge in the wilderness. Men loyal to David gather to him. Samuel dies, and, later, Saul and his sons are killed in a battle with the Philistines.

**2 Samuel** — David is crowned king by his tribesmen in Judah, and they make the city of Hebron the capital of Judah. After a brief civil war, all the tribes of Israel unite under the leadership of David, God's choice. The capital is moved to Jerusalem. God makes a promise to David that a son of his will rule on the throne forever. David seeks to follow God's will, and God blesses David with victories over foreign enemies. Sadly, David falls into the sin of adultery and tries to cover his sin by having the woman's husband killed. God pronounces judgment on David's house, and trouble begins. David's daughter is raped by her half-brother, who is then killed by Absalom, another of David's sons, in revenge. Absalom then plots to overthrow David and take the throne. He gains a following, and David and those loyal to him are forced to flee Jerusalem. Absalom is eventually killed in battle, and David returns home in sorrow. Near the end of his life, David disobeys God and takes a census of the people, a sin for which God sends judgment on the nation.

**1 Kings** — King David dies. His son Solomon takes the throne, but his brother Adonijah challenges him for it. After repeated attempts to usurp authority from his brother, Adonijah is executed. King Solomon is blessed by God with great wisdom, riches, and honor. He oversees the building of the temple in Jerusalem and dedicates it to the Lord in a grand ceremony. Later in life, Solomon forsakes the path of righteousness and serves other gods. After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam takes the throne, but his foolish choices lead to a civil war, and the nation is fractured in two. Rehoboam remains king of the southern kingdom, and a man named Jeroboam is crowned king of the ten tribes to the north. Both kings practice idolatry. Through the years, David's dynasty in the southern kingdom occasionally produces a godly king; most of the kings are wicked, however. The northern kingdom is led by an unbroken series of wicked rulers, including the idolatrous Ahab and his wife Jezebel, during whose reign God sends a drought to punish Israel, along with a mighty prophet, Elijah, to point the people back to God.

**2 Kings** — Elijah is translated to heaven, and Elisha takes his place as God's prophet in Israel.

Jehu becomes Israel's king and wipes out the wicked family line of Ahab. In Judah, Ahab's daughter becomes queen and attempts to kill all of David's heirs, but she fails. Wicked kings rule in both nations, with the exception, in Judah, of a few reformers such as Hezekiah and Josiah. Israel's persistent idolatry finally exhausts God's patience, and He brings the Assyrians against them to conquer the people of Israel. Later, God brings the Babylonians against Judah as a judgment, and Jerusalem is destroyed.

**1 Chronicles** — A genealogy traces God's people from Adam to the kingdom years, with a focus on David's family. The rest of the book covers much of the same material as 1 and 2 Samuel, with an emphasis on the life of David.

**2 Chronicles** — This book covers much the same material as 1 and 2 Kings, with an emphasis on David's dynasty in Judah. The book begins with the construction of the temple under Solomon, and it ends with the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians, with a proclamation, in the last few verses, that the temple would be rebuilt.

**Ezra** — After 70 years of captivity in a foreign land, the people of Judah are allowed to return to their homeland to rebuild. A descendant of David named Zerubbabel, together with some priests, begins to rebuild the temple. Political opposition to the rebuilding forces a halt in construction for about 15 years. But then the work continues, encouraged by two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. About 57 years after the temple is completed, Ezra the scribe arrives in Jerusalem, bringing with him about 2,000 people, including priests and Levites to serve in the temple. Ezra finds that the people living in Judah have lapsed into sin, and he calls the people to repentance and a return to the law of God.

**Nehemiah** — About 14 years after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem, Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer in Persia, learns that the walls of Jerusalem are in a state of disrepair. Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem and oversees the construction of the city walls. He is opposed by enemies of the Jews, who try to thwart the work with various tactics, but the wall is finished with God's blessings in time to observe the Feast of Tabernacles. Ezra reads the book of the law publicly, and the people of Judah rededicate themselves to following it. The book of Nehemiah begins with sadness and ends with singing and celebration.

**Esther** — Some exiled Jews have opted not to return to Jerusalem and have stayed in Persia instead. Xerxes, the king of Persia, chooses as his new queen a young woman named Esther. Esther is a Jewess, but she keeps her ethnicity secret at the behest of her cousin Mordecai, who has raised her. A high-ranking official in the kingdom, a man named Haman, plots a genocide against all the Jews in the kingdom, and he receives the king's permission to carry out his plan—neither he nor the king knowing that the queen is Jewish. Through a series of divinely directed, perfectly timed events, Haman is killed, Mordecai is honored, and the Jews are spared, with Queen Esther being instrumental in it all.

**Job** — A righteous man named Job suffers a series of terrible tragedies that take away his wealth, his family, and his health. Even after losing everything, Job does not curse God. Three friends come to commiserate with Job, but they eventually speak their minds about the situation, advancing the notion that God is punishing Job for some secret sin. Job denies any sinfulness on his part, yet in his pain he cries out to God for answers—he trusts God, but he also wants God to explain Himself. In the end, God shows up and overwhelms Job with His majesty, wisdom, and power. God restores Job's fortune, health, and family, but the answer to *why* Job had suffered God never answers.

**Psalms** — This collection of songs includes praise to the Lord, cries of the needy, worshipful adoration, laments, thanksgiving, prophecy, and the full spectrum of human emotion. Some of the songs were written for specific occasions, such as traveling to the temple or crowning a new king.

**Proverbs** — A collection of moral teachings and general observances about life, this book is directed to those in search of wisdom. Subjects include love, sex, marriage, money, work, children, anger, strife, thoughts, and words.

**Ecclesiastes** — A wise older man who calls himself the Preacher philosophizes about life, looking back over what he has learned from his experiences. The Preacher, having lived apart from God, recounts the futility of various dead-end paths. Nothing in this world satisfies: riches, pleasure, knowledge, or work. Without God in the equation, all is vanity.

**Song of Solomon** — A king and a humble maiden express love and devotion to each other through their courtship, leading to a joyous and affirming consummation of the marriage on the wedding night. The song continues to depict some of the difficulties faced by the bridegroom and his bride in their married life, always coming back to the yearning the lovers have for each other and the undying strength of love.

**Isaiah** — Isaiah is called as a prophet in Judah and brings God's messages to several kings. God proclaims judgment against Judah for their religious hypocrisy. The prophet then delivers messages of warning to other nations, including Assyria, Babylon, Moab, Syria, and Ethiopia. For all of God's anger against His people in Judah, He miraculously saves Jerusalem from an attack by the Assyrians. Isaiah predicts the fall of Judah at the hands of Babylon, but he also promises a restoration to their land. Isaiah looks even farther ahead to the promised Messiah, who will be born of a virgin, be rejected by His people, and be killed in the process of bearing their iniquities—yet the Messiah, God's righteous Servant, will also rule the world from Jerusalem in a kingdom of peace and prosperity.

**Jeremiah** — Jeremiah, living during the time of the Babylonian invasion of Judah, prophesies

Babylon's victory over Judah, a message that brings him much grief from the proud kings and false prophets in Jerusalem. Continually calling God's people to repent, Jeremiah is regularly ignored and even persecuted. Through Jeremiah, God promises that He will one day establish a new covenant with Israel. The prophet lives to see the fall of Jerusalem and predicts that the people's captivity in Babylon will last 70 years.

**Lamentations** — In a long acrostic poem, Jeremiah weeps over the destruction of the land of Judah. The reproach and shame of God's people is overwhelming, and all seems lost. Yet God is just in His discipline, and He is merciful in not destroying the rebellious nation completely; God's people will yet see God's compassion.

**Ezekiel** — This is a book of prophecies written in Babylon by Ezekiel, a priest-turned-prophet. Ezekiel deals with the cause of God's judgment against Judah, which is idolatry and the dishonor Judah had brought upon God's name. Ezekiel also writes of judgment against other nations, such as Edom, Ammon, Egypt, and Philistia, and against the city of Tyre. Ezekiel then promises a miraculous restoration of God's people to their land, the reconstruction of the temple, and God's rule over all the nations of the earth.

**Daniel** — As a young man, Daniel is taken captive to Babylon, but he and three friends remain steadfast to the Lord's commands, and God blesses them with honor and high rank in the Babylonian Empire. They have enemies, though: Daniel's three friends are thrown into a fiery furnace, and Daniel into a den of lions, but God preserves their lives in each case and bestows even more honor upon them. Daniel survives the overthrow of Babylon and continues prophesying into the time of the Persian Empire. Daniel's prophecies are far-reaching, accurately predicting the rise and fall of many nations and the coming rule of God's chosen king, the Messiah.

**Hosea** — Hosea's mission is to call Israel to repentance, as God is poised to judge them for their corruption and idolatry. At God's command, Hosea marries a wife who is unfaithful to him, and then he must redeem her from prostitution. This sordid experience is an illustration of Israel's spiritual adultery and the fact that a loving God is still pursuing them to redeem them and restore them to their proper place.

**Joel** — Joel ministers in Judah during a time of drought and a locust plague, events that are signs of God's judgment on the nation. Joel uses the current judgment to point the people to the future, worldwide judgment of the Day of the Lord, and he calls on everyone to repent. Joel's final promise is that the Lord will dwell with His people in Zion and bring great blessing to the restored land.

**Amos** — Amos begins with pronouncing judgment against Damascus, Tyre, Edom, and Gaza, among other places. The prophet travels north from Judah to Israel to warn that nation of God's

judgment. He lists their sins and extends God's invitation to repent and be forgiven. After the destruction of Israel, God promises, there will be a time of restoration.

**Obadiah** — From their seemingly secure, rock-bound homes, the Edomites had rejoiced at Judah's fall, but Obadiah brings God's sobering message: Edom, too, will be conquered, and that without remedy. God's people will be the ultimate victors.

**Jonah** — Jonah, a prophet in Israel, is instructed by God to go to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh to prophesy against it. Jonah disobeys, attempting to travel away from Nineveh, but God intercepts him at sea. Jonah is thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish. In the belly of the fish, Jonah repents, and the fish spits him back on dry ground. When Jonah prophesies in Nineveh, the Assyrians humble themselves before God and repent, and God does not bring judgment upon them. Jonah is angry that God has forgiven the people he hates, and God reasons with his obstinate prophet.

**Micah** — In a series of three messages, Micah calls on both Judah and Israel to hear the word of God. He prophesies of coming judgment on both kingdoms and foresees the blessed kingdom of God, ruled by a king who would be born in Bethlehem. Micah ends his book with a promise that God's anger will turn and that God's people will be restored.

**Nahum** — Nahum's prophecy concerns the destruction of Nineveh. Nahum gives the reasons for it and promises God's judgment on this nation that had once terrorized the rest of the world. Unlike God's judgment against Israel, the judgment against Nineveh will have no respite, and the destruction will not be followed by restoration.

**Habakkuk** — The prophet questions God about something he cannot understand: namely, how God can use the wicked Babylonians to punish God's own people, Judah. The Lord answers by reminding Habakkuk of His sovereignty and faithfulness and that, in this world, the just will live by faith.

**Zephaniah** — Zephaniah warns of the coming Day of the Lord, a prophecy fulfilled, in part, by the invasion of Babylon and, more remotely, at the end of time. Other nations besides Judah are also warned of coming judgment, including Philistia, Moab, Cush, and Assyria. Jerusalem is called to repent, and the book ends with a promise from God to restore His people to favor and glory.

**Haggai** — Haggai lives and preaches during the time of Zerubbabel and Zechariah. The reconstruction of the temple had begun, but opposition from the Jews' enemies has halted the work for about 15 years. Haggai preaches a series of four sermons to spur the people back to work so that the temple can be completed.

**Zechariah** — A contemporary of Haggai and Zerubbabel, Zechariah encourages the people of Jerusalem to finish the reconstruction of the temple, a work that has languished for about 15 years. Eight visions relate God's continuing plan for His people. Judgment on Israel's enemies is promised, along with God's blessings on His chosen people. Several messianic prophecies are included, predicting the Messiah's coming, His suffering, and His eventual conquering glory.

**Malachi** — Ministering to post-exilic Israel, Malachi calls God's people to repentance. The prophet condemns the sins of divorce, bringing impure sacrifices, withholding tithes, and profaning God's name. The book, and the Old Testament, ends with a description of the Day of the Lord and the promise that Elijah will come before that dreadful day.

### **New Testament:**

**Matthew** — The ministry of Jesus Christ is presented from the point of view that Jesus is the Son of David and thus the rightful king to rule from Israel's throne. Jesus offers the kingdom to His people, but Israel rejects Him as their king and crucifies Him. Jesus rises again and sends His disciples into all the world to proclaim His teaching.

**Mark** — The ministry of Jesus Christ is presented from the point of view that Jesus is the Righteous Servant of God. Jesus obeys the Father's will and accomplishes all He had been sent to do, including dying for sinners and rising again from the dead.

**Luke** — The ministry of Jesus Christ is presented from the point of view that Jesus is the Son of Man who came to save the whole world. Jesus shows the love of God to all classes of people, regardless of race or gender. He is unjustly betrayed, arrested, and murdered, but He rises again.

**John** — The ministry of Jesus Christ is presented from the point of view that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus speaks at length of His nature and work and the necessity of faith, and He proves that He is the Son of God through a series of public miracles. He is crucified and rises again.

**Acts** — This sequel to the life of Christ follows the ministry of the apostles following Jesus' ascension. The Holy Spirit arrives to fill and empower Jesus' followers, who begin to preach the gospel in the midst of mounting persecution. Paul, a former enemy of the Christians, is converted and called by Christ as an apostle. The church begins in Jerusalem, expands to Samaria, and spreads to the Roman world.

**Romans** — This theological treatise, written by Paul on one of his missionary journeys, examines the righteousness of God and how God can declare guilty sinners to be righteous based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Having been justified by faith, believers live in holiness before the world.

**1 Corinthians** — The church in Corinth is riddled with problems, and the apostle Paul writes to



give them God's instructions on how to deal with various issues, including sin and division in the church, marriage, idolatry, spiritual gifts, the future resurrection, and the conduct of public worship.

**2 Corinthians** — The problems in the church in Corinth have for the most part been worked through, and Paul writes this letter to encourage them, to explain the love gift he is collecting for Judean Christians, and to defend his apostleship against critics who are speaking out against him.

**Galatians** — False teachers have infiltrated the churches in Galatia, falsely suggesting that works of the law (specifically circumcision) must be added to faith in Christ in order for salvation to be real. In no uncertain terms, Paul condemns the mixture of law and grace, showing that salvation and sanctification are all of grace. Christ's salvation has set us free. We rely on the Spirit's work, not our own.

**Ephesians** — Salvation comes by grace through faith in Christ, and not by our own works. The life Jesus gives, to Jew and Gentile alike, results in a new heart and a new walk in this world. The church is the Body of Christ, and marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. God has provided spiritual armor to wage spiritual battle.

**Philippians** — Writing this letter from a Roman prison, Paul thanks the church in Philippi for the love gift they had sent him. The gospel of Christ is advancing in the world, despite hardship, and Christians can rejoice in that. We are urged to humble ourselves as Christ did, be unified, and press toward the goal of pleasing the Lord in all things.

**Colossians** — Despite what false teachers might claim, Jesus Christ is the Savior, Lord, and Creator of all things. In Him, all believers are made alive and complete; they need not submit themselves to manmade regulations or the mandates of the Old Testament law. The new life we have in Christ will affect our relationships with spouses, parents, children, masters, and servants.

**1 Thessalonians** — Paul reviews the start of the church in Thessalonica, and he commends them for their steadfast faith. Believers are encouraged to live pure lives and to maintain the hope that Jesus will return. When Christ comes again, He will resurrect believers who have died and will rapture those still living to be with Him forever. The Day of the Lord is coming, which will result in the judgment of this world.

**2 Thessalonians** — The church of Thessalonica is enduring persecution, and some believers wonder if the Day of the Lord had already arrived. Paul assures them that what they are experiencing is not God's judgment. Before that terrible day comes, there must be a worldwide rebellion, a removal of the Restraint, and the rise to power of the man of lawlessness. But God will protect His children. Until the time that Christ returns, keep doing what is right.

**1 Timothy** — Timothy, the pastor of the church in Ephesus, is the recipient of this letter from Paul. A pastor must be qualified spiritually, be on guard against false doctrine, pray, care for those in the church, train other leaders, and above all faithfully preach the truth.

**2 Timothy** — In this very personal letter at the end of his life, Paul encourages Timothy to hold fast to the faith, focus on what is truly important, persevere in dangerous times, and preach the Word of God.

**Titus** — Titus, an overseer of churches on the island of Crete, has the job of appointing elders in the churches there, making sure the men are qualified spiritually. He must beware of false teachers, avoid distractions, model the Christian life, and enjoin all believers to practice good works.

**Philemon** — In this short letter to Philemon, a believer in Colossae, the apostle Paul urges him to show the love of Christ and be reconciled to a runaway, thieving slave. Under Roman law, the slave could face severe punishment, but Paul urges grace for the sake of Christ. Philemon should welcome his slave back into the household, not as a slave now but as a beloved brother in Christ.

**Hebrews** — There are Jewish members of the church who are tempted to return to the Jewish law. The author of this epistle urges them not to look back but to move on to full spiritual maturity, by faith. Jesus Christ is better than angels and better than Moses, and He has provided a better sacrifice, a better priesthood, and a better covenant than anything in the Old Testament. Having left Egypt, we must enter the Promised Land, not continue to wander aimlessly in the wilderness.

**James** — In this very practical book, James shows what faith lived out looks like. True, saving faith will affect our prayer life, our words, our response to trials, and our treatment of others.

**1 Peter** — The apostle Peter writes to believers under persecution in Asia Minor, addressing them as “God’s elect, exiles scattered” ([1 Peter 1:1](#)). He reminds them of the grace of God, assures them of their heavenly home, teaches them to exhibit holiness, instructs them on marital relations, and encourages them as they face suffering.

**2 Peter** — With his death impending, Peter writes the churches, exhorting them to follow the Word of God, identify and avoid false teachers, and live in holiness as they await the second coming of Christ.

**1 John** — God is light, love, and truth. Those who truly belong to Christ will seek fellowship with His redeemed; walk in the light, not in darkness; confess sin; obey God’s Word; love God;

experience a decreasing pattern of sin in their lives; demonstrate love for other Christians; and experience victory in their Christian walk.

**2 John** — The Christian life is a balance of truth and love. We cannot forsake truth in the name of love; neither can we cease loving because of a misdirected notion of upholding the truth.

**3 John** — Two men are contrasted: Gaius, who shows his commitment to truth and love through hospitality; and Diotrefes, who shows his malice and pride through a lack of hospitality.

**Jude** — The message of the gospel will not change. But there are men who attempt to pervert the message and teach false doctrines to benefit themselves and lead people astray. These men must be resisted in the truth.

**Revelation** — Jesus is the Lord of the church, and He knows the condition of each local body of believers. The end times will be marked by an increase in wickedness, the rise of the Antichrist's one-world government, and the fury of Satan against God's people on earth. God pours out His wrath on a rebellious and unrepentant world in a series of judgments that steadily increase in severity. Finally, the Lamb of God returns to earth with the armies of heaven, defeating the forces of evil arrayed against Him and setting up His kingdom of peace. Satan, the Antichrist, and the wicked of every age are thrown into the lake of fire, while the followers of Christ inherit a new heaven and new earth.

## Old Testament Survey

The Old Testament is divided into five sections: The Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy), the historical books (Joshua through Esther), the poetic books (Job through Song of Solomon), the Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel), and the Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi). The Old Testament was written from approximately 1400 B.C. to approximately 400 B.C. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with a few small sections written in Aramaic (essentially a variation of Hebrew).

The Old Testament deals primarily with the relationship between God and the nation of Israel. The Pentateuch deals with the creation of Israel and God establishing a covenant relationship with Israel. The historical books record Israel's history, its victories and successes along with its defeats and failures. The poetic books give us a more intimate look at God's relationship with Israel and His passion for Israel to worship and obey Him. The prophetic books are God's call to Israel to repent from its idolatry and

unfaithfulness and to return to a relationship of obedience and spiritual fidelity.

Perhaps a better title would be the First Testament. The word "old" tends to give the idea of "outdated" or "not-relevant." That could not be further from the truth. Please read the following articles:

A survey of the Old Testament is a worthwhile and spiritually-enriching endeavor. Below are links to summaries of the various books of the Old Testament. We sincerely hope you find our Old Testament Survey beneficial in your walk with Christ.



# Summary of the Book of Genesis

**Author:** The author of the Book of Genesis is not identified. Traditionally, the author has always been assumed to have been Moses. There is no conclusive reason to deny the Mosaic authorship of Genesis. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Genesis? Who was the author of Genesis?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Genesis does not state when it was written. The date of authorship is likely between 1440 and 1400 B.C., between the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and his death.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Genesis has sometimes been called the "seed-plot" of the entire Bible. Most of the major doctrines in the Bible are introduced in "seed" form in the Book of Genesis. Along with the fall of man, God's promise of salvation or redemption is recorded ([Genesis 3:15](#)). The doctrines of creation, imputation of sin, justification, atonement, depravity, wrath, grace, sovereignty, responsibility, and many more are all addressed in this book of origins called Genesis.

Many of the great questions of life are answered in Genesis. (1) Where did I come from? (God created us - [Genesis 1:1](#)) (2) Why am I here? (we are here to have a relationship with God - [Genesis 15:6](#)) (3) Where am I going? (we have a destination after death - [Genesis 25:8](#)). Genesis appeals to the scientist, the historian, the theologian, the housewife, the farmer, the traveler, and the man or woman of God. It is a fitting beginning for God's story of His plan for mankind, the Bible.

## Key Verses:

[Genesis 1:1](#), "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

[Genesis 3:15](#), "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

[Genesis 12:2-3](#), "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

[Genesis 50:20](#), "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Genesis can be divided into two sections: Primitive History and Patriarchal History. Primitive history records (1) Creation (Genesis chapters 1-2); (2) the Fall of man (Genesis chapters 3-5); (3) the Flood (Genesis chapters 6-9); and (4) the dispersion (Genesis chapters 10-11). Patriarchal history records the lives of four great men: (1) Abraham ([Genesis 12-25:8](#)); (2) Isaac (Genesis 21:1-35-29); (3) Jacob ([Genesis 25:21-50:14](#)); and (4) Joseph ([Genesis 30:22-50:26](#)).

God created a universe that was good and free from sin. God created humanity to have a personal relationship with Him. Adam and Eve sinned and thereby brought evil and death into the world. Evil increased steadily in the world until there was only one family in which God found anything good. God sent the Flood to wipe out evil, but delivered Noah and his family along with the animals in the Ark. After the Flood, humanity began again to multiply and spread throughout the world.

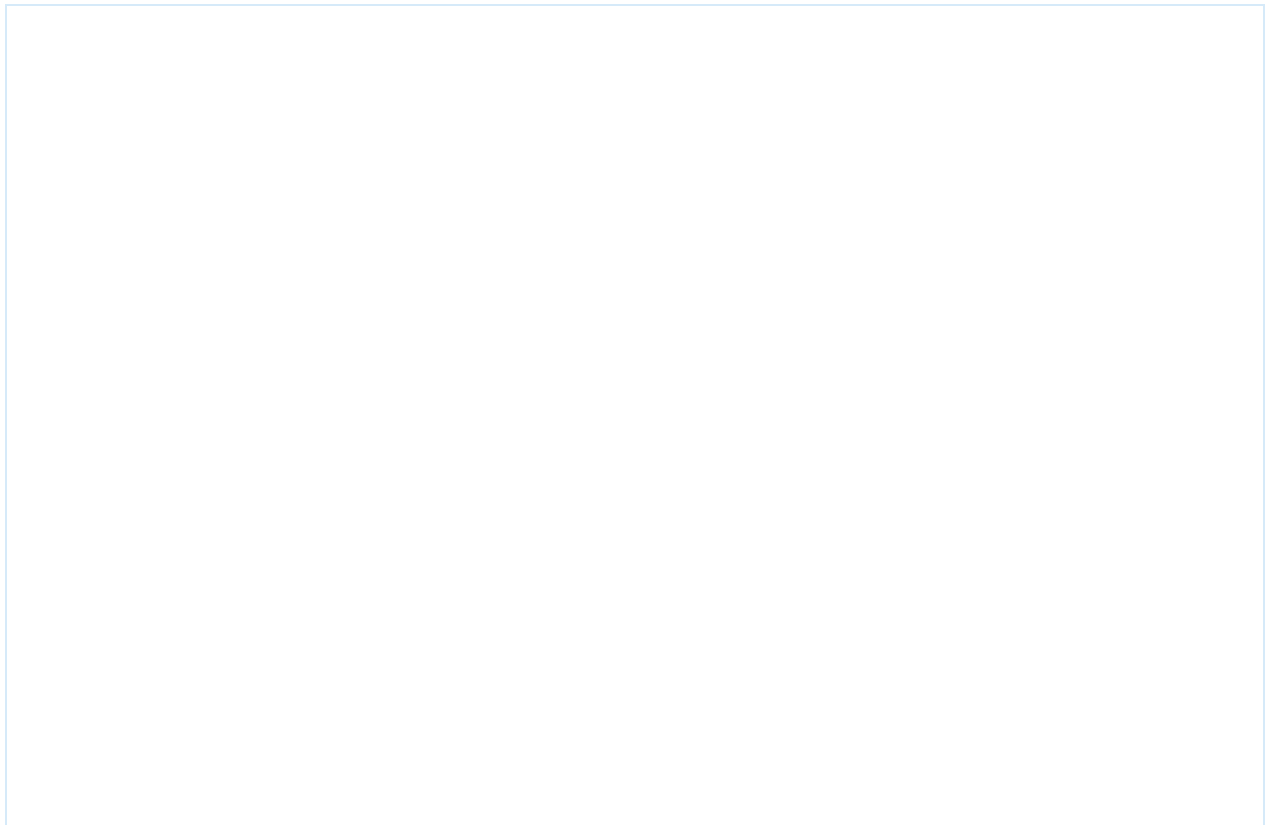
God chose Abraham, through whom He would create a chosen people and eventually the promised Messiah. The chosen line was passed on to Abraham's son Isaac, and then to Isaac's son Jacob. God changed Jacob's name to Israel, and his twelve sons became the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. In His sovereignty, God had Jacob's son Joseph sent to Egypt by the despicable actions of Joseph's brothers. This act, intended for evil by the brothers, was intended for good by God and eventually resulted in Jacob and his family being saved from a devastating famine by Joseph, who had risen to great power in Egypt.

**Foreshadowings:** Many New Testament themes have their roots in Genesis. Jesus Christ is the Seed of the woman who will destroy Satan's power ([Gen. 3:15](#)). As with Joseph, God's plan for the good of mankind through the sacrifice of His Son was intended for good, even though those who crucified Jesus intended it for evil. Noah and his family are the first of many remnants pictured in the Bible. Despite overwhelming odds and difficult circumstances, God always preserves a remnant of the faithful for Himself. The remnant of Israelites returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity; God preserved a remnant through all the persecutions described in Isaiah and Jeremiah; a remnant of 7,000 priests were hidden from the wrath of Jezebel; God promises that a remnant of Jews will one day embrace their true Messiah ([Romans 11](#)). The faith displayed by Abraham would be the gift of God and the basis of salvation for both Jew and Gentile ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#); [Hebrews 11](#)).

**Practical Application:** The overriding theme of Genesis is God's eternal existence and

His creation of the world. There is no effort on the part of the author to defend the existence of God; he simply states that God is, always was, and always will be, almighty over all. In the same way, we have confidence in the truths of Genesis, despite the claims of those who would deny them. All people, regardless of culture, nationality or language, are accountable to the Creator. But because of sin, introduced into the world at the Fall, we are separated from Him. But through one small nation, Israel, God's redemptive plan for mankind was revealed and made available to all. We rejoice in that plan.

God created the universe, the earth, and every living being. We can trust Him to handle the concerns in our lives. God can take a hopeless situation, e.g. Abraham and Sarah being childless, and do amazing things if we will simply trust and obey. Terrible and unjust things may happen in our lives, as with Joseph, but God will always bring about a greater good if we have faith in Him and His sovereign plan. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" ([Romans 8:28](#)).



# Summary of the Book of Exodus

**Author:** Moses was the author of the Book of Exodus ([Exodus 17:14](#); [24:4-7](#); [34:27](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Exodus? Who was the author of Exodus?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Exodus was written between 1440 and 1400 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The word "exodus" means departure. In God's timing, the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt marked the end of a period of oppression for Abraham's descendants ([Genesis 15:13](#)), and the beginning of the fulfillment of the covenant promise to Abraham that his descendants would not only live in the Promised Land, but would also multiply and become a great nation ([Genesis 12:1-3, 7](#)). The purpose of the book may be expressed as tracing the rapid growth of Jacob's descendants from Egypt to the establishment of the theocratic nation in their Promised Land.

## Key Verses:

[Exodus 1:8](#), "Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt."

[Exodus 2:24-25](#), "God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them."

[Exodus 12:27](#), "'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.' Then the people bowed down and worshiped."

[Exodus 20:2-3](#), "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."

**Brief Summary:** Exodus begins where Genesis leaves off as God deals with His chosen people, the Jews. It traces the events from the time Israel entered Egypt as guests of Joseph, who was powerful in Egypt, until they were eventually delivered from the cruel bondage of slavery into which they had been brought by "...a new king...which knew not Joseph" ([Exodus 1:8](#)).

Chapters 1-14 describe the conditions of oppression of the Jews under Pharaoh, the rise



of Moses as their deliverer, the plagues God brought upon Egypt for the refusal of their leader to submit to Him, and the departure from Egypt. God's sovereign and powerful hand is seen in the miracles of the plagues—ending with the plague of death of the firstborn and the institution of the first Passover—the deliverance of the Israelites, the parting of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptian army.

The middle portion of Exodus is dedicated to the wandering in the wilderness and the miraculous provision by God for His people. But even though He gave them bread from heaven, sweet water from bitter, water from a rock, victory over those who would destroy them, His Law written on tablets of stone by His own hand, and His presence in the form of pillars of fire and cloud, the people continually grumbled and rebelled against Him.

The last third of the book describes the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and the plan for the Tabernacle with its various sacrifices, altars, furniture, ceremonies, and forms of worship.

**Foreshadowings:** The numerous sacrifices required of the Israelites were a picture of the ultimate sacrifice, the Passover Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The night of the last plague on Egypt, an unblemished lamb was killed and its blood applied to the doorposts of the houses of God's people, protecting them from the angel of death. This foreshadowed Jesus, the Lamb of God without spot or blemish ([1 Peter 1:19](#)), whose blood applied to us ensures eternal life. Among the symbolic presentations of Christ in the book of Exodus is the story of the water from the rock in [Exodus 17:6](#). Just as Moses struck the rock to provide life-giving water for the people to drink, so did God strike the Rock of our salvation, crucifying Him for our sin, and from the Rock came the gift of living water ([John 4:10](#)). The provision of manna in the wilderness is a perfect picture of Christ, the Bread of Life ([John 6:48](#)), provided by God to give us life.

**Practical Application:** The Mosaic Law was given in part to show mankind that they were incapable of keeping it. We are unable to please God by law-keeping; therefore, Paul exhorts us to "put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified" ([Galatians 2:16](#)).

God's provision for the Israelites, from deliverance from captivity to the [manna](#) and [quail](#) in the wilderness, are clear indications of His gracious provision for His people. God has promised to supply all our needs. "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" ([1 Corinthians 1:9](#)).

We are to trust in the Lord, for He can deliver us from anything. But God does not allow sin to go unpunished forever. As a result, we can trust Him in His retribution and justice. When God removes us from a bad situation, we should not seek to go back. When God makes demands of us, He expects us to comply, but at the same time He provides grace and mercy because He knows that, on our own, we will not be able to fully obey.

# Summary of the Book of Leviticus

**Author:** Moses was the author of the Book of Leviticus. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Leviticus? Who was the author of Leviticus?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Leviticus was written between 1440 and 1400 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Because the Israelites had been held captive in Egypt for 400 years, the concept of God had been distorted by the polytheistic, pagan Egyptians. The purpose of Leviticus is to provide instruction and laws to guide a sinful, yet redeemed people in their relationship with a holy God. There is an emphasis in Leviticus on the need for personal holiness in response to a holy God. Sin must be atoned for through the offering of proper sacrifices (chapters 8-10). Other topics covered in the book are diets (clean and unclean foods), childbirth, and diseases which are carefully regulated (chapters 11-15). Chapter 16 describes the Day of Atonement when an annual sacrifice is made for the cumulative sin of the people. Furthermore, the people of God are to be circumspect in their personal, moral, and social living, in contrast to the then-current practices of the heathen roundabout them (chapters 17-22).

## Key Verses:

[Leviticus 1:4](#), "He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him."

[Leviticus 17:11](#), "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."

[Leviticus 19:18](#), "'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

**Brief Summary:** Chapters 1–7 outline the offerings required of both the laity and the priesthood. Chapters 8–10 describe the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Chapters 11–16 are the prescriptions for various types of uncleanness. The final 10 chapters are God's guidelines to His people for practical holiness. Various feasts were instituted in the people's worship of God, convened and practiced according to

God's laws. Blessings or curses would accompany either the keeping or neglect of God's commandments (chapter 26). Vows to the Lord are covered in chapter 27.

The primary theme of Leviticus is holiness. God's demand for holiness in His people is based on His own holy nature. A corresponding theme is that of atonement. Holiness must be maintained before God, and holiness can only be attained through a proper atonement.

**Foreshadowings:** Much of the ritualistic practices of worship picture in many ways the person and work of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. [Hebrews 10](#) tells us that the Mosaic Law is "only a shadow of the good things that are coming" by which is meant that the daily sacrifices offered by the priests for the sin of the people were a representation of the ultimate Sacrifice—Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice would be once for all time for those who would believe in Him. The holiness imparted temporarily by the Law would one day be replaced by the absolute attainment of holiness when Christians exchanged their sin for the righteousness of Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

**Practical Application:** God takes His holiness very seriously, and so should we. The trend in the postmodern church is to create God in our own image, giving Him the attributes we would like Him to have instead of the ones His Word describes. God's utter holiness, His transcendent splendor, and His "unapproachable light" ([1 Timothy 6:16](#)) are foreign concepts to many Christians. We are called to walk in the Light and to put away the darkness in our lives so that we may be pleasing in His sight. A holy God cannot tolerate blatant, unashamed sin in His people and His holiness requires Him to punish it. We dare not be flippant in our attitudes toward sin or God's loathing of it, nor should we make light of it in any way.

Praise the Lord that because of Jesus' death on our behalf, we no longer have to offer animal sacrifices. Leviticus is all about substitution. The death of the animals was a substitute penalty for those who have sinned. In the same way, but infinitely better, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was the substitute for our sins. Now we can stand before a God of utter holiness without fear because He sees in us the righteousness of Christ.

# Summary of the Book of Numbers

**Author:** Moses was the author of the Book of Numbers. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Numbers? Who was the author of Numbers?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Numbers was written between 1440 and 1400 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The message of the Book of Numbers is universal and timeless. It reminds believers of the spiritual warfare in which they are engaged, for Numbers is the book of the service and walk of God's people. The Book of Numbers essentially bridges the gap between the Israelites receiving the Law (Exodus and Leviticus) and preparing them to enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy and Joshua).

## Key Verses:

[Numbers 6:24-26](#), "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 12:6-8](#), "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

[Numbers 14:30-34](#), "Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you — your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years — one year for each of the forty days you explored the land — you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you."

**Brief Summary:** Most of the events of the Book of Numbers take place in the wilderness, primarily between the second and fortieth years of the wandering of the Israelites. The first 25 chapters of the book chronicle the experiences of the first

generation of Israel in the wilderness, while the rest of the book describes the experiences of the second generation. The theme of obedience and rebellion followed by repentance and blessing runs through the entire book, as well as the entire Old Testament.

The theme of the holiness of God is continued from the book of Leviticus into the book of Numbers, which reveals God's instruction and preparation of His people to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. The importance of the Book of Numbers is indicated by its being referred to in the New Testament many times. The Holy Spirit called special attention to Numbers in [1 Corinthians 10:1-12](#). The words "all these things happened to them for examples" refers to the sin of the Israelites and God's displeasure with them.

In [Romans 11:22](#), Paul speaks about the "goodness and severity of God." That, in a nutshell, is the message of Numbers. The severity of God is seen in the death of the rebellious generation in the wilderness, those who never entered the Promised Land. The goodness of God is realized in the new generation. God protected, preserved, and provided for these people until they possessed the land. This reminds us of the justice and love of God, which are always in sovereign harmony.

**Foreshadowings:** God's demand for holiness in His people is completely and finally satisfied in Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill the Law on our behalf ([Matthew 5:17](#)). The concept of the promised Messiah pervades the book. The story in chapter 19 of the sacrifice of the red heifer "without defect or blemish" prefigures Christ, the Lamb of God without spot or blemish who was sacrificed for our sins. The image of the bronze snake lifted up on the pole to provide physical healing (chapter 21) also prefigures the lifting up of Christ, either upon the cross, or in the ministry of the Word, that whoever looks to Him by faith may have spiritual healing.

In chapter 24, Balaam's fourth oracle speaks of the star and the scepter who is to rise out of Jacob. Here is a prophecy of Christ who is called the "morning star" in [Revelation 22:16](#) for His glory, brightness, and splendor, and for the light that comes by Him. He may also be called a scepter, that is, a scepter bearer, because of his royalty. He not only has the name of a king, but has a kingdom, and rules with a scepter of grace, mercy, and righteousness.

**Practical Application:** A major theological theme developed in the New Testament from Numbers is that sin and unbelief, especially rebellion, reap the judgment of God. First Corinthians specifically says—and [Hebrews 3:7— 4:13](#) strongly implies— that these events were written as examples for believers to observe and avoid. We are not to "set our hearts on evil things" ([1 Corinthians 10:6](#)), or be sexually immoral ([1 Corinthians](#)

[10:8](#)) or put God to the test ([1 Corinthians 10:9](#)) or gripe and complain ([1 Corinthians 10:10](#)).

Just as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness 40 years because of their rebellion, so too does God sometimes allow us to wander away from Him and suffer loneliness and lack of blessings when we rebel against Him. But God is faithful and just, and just as He restored the Israelites to their rightful place in His heart, He will always restore Christians to the place of blessing and intimate fellowship with Him if we repent and return to Him ([1 John 1:9](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Deuteronomy

**Author:** Moses wrote the Book of Deuteronomy, which is in fact a collection of his sermons to Israel just before they crossed the Jordan. "These are the words which Moses spoke" (1:1). Someone else (Joshua, perhaps) may have written the last chapter. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Deuteronomy? Who was the author of Deuteronomy?](#)

**Date of Writing:** These sermons were given during the 40-day period prior to Israel's entering the Promised Land. The first sermon was delivered on the 1st day of the 11th month (1:3), and the Israelites crossed the Jordan 70 days later, on the 10th day of the 1st month ([Joshua 4:19](#)). Subtract 30 days of mourning after Moses' death ([Deuteronomy 34:8](#)), and we're left with 40 days. The year was 1406 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** A new generation of Israelites was about to enter the Promised Land. This multitude had not experienced the miracle at the Red Sea or heard the law given at Sinai, and they were about to enter a new land with many dangers and temptations. The book of Deuteronomy was given to remind them of God's law and God's power.

## Key Verses:

"Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you." ([Deuteronomy 4:2](#))

"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. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." ([Deuteronomy 6:4-7](#))

"He said to them, 'Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.'" ([Deuteronomy 32:46-47](#))

**Brief Summary:** The Israelites are commanded to remember four things: God's



faithfulness, God's holiness, God's blessings, and God's warnings. The first three chapters recap the trip from Egypt to their current location, Moab. Chapter 4 is a call to obedience, to be faithful to the God who was faithful to them.

Chapters 5 through 26 are a repetition of the Law. The Ten Commandments, the laws concerning sacrifices and special days, and the rest of the laws are given to the new generation. Blessings are promised to those who obey (5:29; 6:17-19; 11:13-15), and famine is promised to those who break the Law (11:16-17).

The theme of blessing and cursing is continued in chapters 27-30. This portion of the book ends with a clear choice set before Israel: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." God's desire for His people is found in what He recommends: "choose life" (30:19).

In the final chapters, Moses encourages the people; commissions his replacement, Joshua; records a song; and gives a final blessing to each of the tribes of Israel. Chapter 34 relates the circumstances of Moses' death. He climbed Mt. Pisgah, where the Lord showed him the Promised Land that he could not enter. At 120 years old, but still with good eyesight and the strength of youth, Moses died in the presence of the Lord. The book of Deuteronomy ends with a short obituary on this great prophet.

**Foreshadowings:** Many New Testament themes are present in the Book of Deuteronomy. The foremost among them is the necessity of keeping perfectly the Mosaic Law and the impossibility of doing so. The endless sacrifices necessary to atone for the sins of the people—who continually transgressed the Law—would find their fulfillment in the final "once for all" sacrifice of Christ ([Hebrews 10:10](#)). Because of His atoning work on the cross, we would need no further sacrifices for sin.

God's choosing of the Israelites as His special people foreshadows His choosing of those who would believe in Christ ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). In [Deuteronomy 18:15-19](#), Moses prophesies of another prophet—the ultimate Prophet to come who is the Messiah. Like Moses, He would receive and preach divine revelation and He would lead His people ([John 6:14](#); [7:40](#)).

**Practical Application:** The book of Deuteronomy underscores the importance of God's Word. It is a vital part of our lives. Although we are no longer under the Old Testament law, we are still responsible to submit to the will of God in our lives. Simple obedience brings blessing, and sin has its own consequences.

None of us is "above the law." Even Moses, the leader and prophet chosen by God, was

required to obey. The reason that he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land was that he disobeyed the Lord's clear command ([Numbers 20:13](#)).

During the time of His testing in the wilderness, Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy three times ([Matthew 4](#)). In so doing, Jesus illustrated for us the necessity of hiding God's Word in our hearts that we might not sin against Him ([Psalm 119:11](#)).

As Israel remembered God's faithfulness, so should we. The crossing of the Red Sea, the holy presence at Sinai, and the blessing of manna in the desert should be an encouragement to us as well. A great way to keep going forward is to take some time to look back and see what God has done.

We also have a beautiful picture in Deuteronomy of a loving God Who desires a relationship with His children. The Lord names love as the reason that He brought Israel out of Egypt "with a mighty hand" and redeemed them ([Deuteronomy 7:7-9](#)). What a wonderful thing to be free from the bondage of sin and loved by an all-powerful God!

# Summary of the Book of Joshua

**Author:** The Book of Joshua does not explicitly name its author. More than likely Joshua the son of Nun, the successor of Moses as leader over Israel, penned much of this book. The latter part of the book was written by at least one other person after the death of Joshua. It is also possible that several sections were edited / compiled following Joshua's death. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Joshua? Who was the author of Joshua?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Joshua was likely written between 1400 and 1370 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Joshua provides an overview of the military campaigns to conquer the land area that God had promised. Following the exodus from Egypt and the subsequent forty years of the wilderness wanderings, the newly-formed nation is now poised to enter the Promised Land, conquer the inhabitants, and occupy the territory. The overview that we have here gives abbreviated and selective details of many of the battles and the manner in which the land was not only conquered, but how it was divided into tribal areas.

## Key Verses:

[Joshua 1:6-9](#), "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 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. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

[Joshua 24:14-15](#), "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Joshua continues the story of the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt. The book chronicles the approximately 20 years of Joshua's

leadership of the people after Moses anointed him at the end of Deuteronomy. The twenty-four chapter divisions of the Book of Joshua can be summarized as follows:

Chapters 1-12: Entering and conquering the Promised Land.

Chapters 13-22: Instructions for distributing the portions of the Promised Land.

Chapters 23-24: Joshua's farewell address

**Foreshadowings:** The story of Rahab the harlot and her great faith in the God of the Israelites gives her a place with those honored for their faith in [Hebrews 11:31](#). Hers is a story of God's grace to sinners and salvation by faith alone. Most importantly, by God's grace she was in the Messianic line ([Matthew 1:5](#)).

One of the ceremonial rituals of [Joshua 5](#) finds its perfect fulfillment in the New Testament. Verses 1-9 describe God's commandment that those who were born in the wilderness were to be circumcised when they came into the Promised Land. By so doing, God "rolled away the reproach of Egypt" from them, meaning that He cleansed them from the sins of their former life. [Colossians 2:10-12](#) describes believers as having been circumcised in their hearts by Christ Himself, by whom we have put off the sinful nature of our former lives without Christ.

God established cities of refuge so that those who accidentally killed someone could live there without fear of retribution. Christ is our refuge to whom we "have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us" ([Hebrews 6:18](#)).

The Book of Joshua has an overriding theological theme of rest. The Israelites, after wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, finally entered the rest God had prepared for them in the land of Canaan. The writer of Hebrews uses this incident as a warning to us not to let unbelief keep us from entering into God's rest in Christ ([Hebrews 3:7-12](#)).

**Practical Application:** One of the key verses of the Book of Joshua is 1:8 "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it." The Old Testament is replete with stories of how the people "forgot" God and His Word and suffered terrible consequences. For the Christian, the Word of God is our lifeblood. If we neglect it, our lives will suffer accordingly. But if we take to heart the principle of verse 1:8, we will be complete and able to be of use in God's kingdom ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)), and we will find that God's promises in [Joshua 1:8-9](#) will be ours as well.

Joshua is a prime example of the benefits of a worthy mentor. For years he remained close to Moses. He watched Moses as he followed God in an almost flawless manner. He

learned to pray in a personal way from Moses. He learned how to obey through the example of Moses. Joshua apparently also learned from the negative example that cost Moses the joy of actually entering the Promised Land. If you are alive, you are a mentor. Someone, somewhere, is watching you. Some younger person or someone that you are influencing is seeing how you live and how you react. Someone is learning from you. Someone will follow your example. Mentoring is far more than the words that are spoken by the mentor. His or her entire life is on display.

# Summary of the Book of Judges

**Author:** The Book of Judges does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that the Prophet Samuel was the author of Judges. Internal evidence indicates that the author of Judges lived shortly after the period of the Judges. Samuel fits this qualification. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Judges? Who was the author of Judges?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Judges was likely written between 1045 and 1000 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Judges can be divided into two sections: 1) Chapters 1-16 which gives an account of the wars of deliverance beginning with the Israelites' defeat of the Canaanites and ending with the defeat of the Philistines and the death of Samson; 2) Chapters 17-21 which is referred to as an appendix and does not relate to the previous chapters. These chapters are noted as a time "when there was no king in Israel ([Judges 17:6](#); [18:1](#); [19:1](#); [21:25](#))."

The Book of Ruth was originally a part of the Book of Judges, but in A.D. 450 it was removed to become a book of its own.

## Key Verses:

[Judges 2:16-19](#): "Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the LORD's commands. Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways."

[Judges 10:15](#): "But the Israelites said to the LORD, 'We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now.'"

[Judges 21:25](#): "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Judges covers about 330 years of Israel's history (c. 1383 BC to c. 1052 BC) and is a tragic account of how Yahweh [God] was taken for granted by

His children year after year, century after century. Judges is a sad contrast to the book of Joshua which chronicles the blessings God bestowed on the Israelites for their obedience in conquering the land. In Judges, they were disobedient and idolatrous, leading to their many defeats. Yet God has never failed to open His arms in love to His people whenever they repent from their wicked ways and call upon His name ([Judges 2:18](#)). Through the twelve judges of Israel, God honored His promise to Abraham to protect and bless his offspring ([Genesis 12:2-3](#)).

After the death of Joshua and his contemporaries, the Israelites returned to serving Baal and Ashtaroath. God allowed the Israelites to suffer the consequences of worshiping false gods. It was then that the people of God would cry out to Yahweh for help. God sent His children judges to lead them in righteous living. But time after time they would turn their backs on God and return to their lives of wickedness. However, keeping His part of the covenant with Abraham, God would save His people from their oppressors throughout the 480-year span of the Book of Judges.

Probably the most notable judge was the 12th judge, Samson, who came to lead the Israelites after a 40-year captivity under the rule of the ruthless Philistines. Samson led God's people to victory over the Philistines where he lost his own life after 20 years as judge of Israel.

**Foreshadowings:** The announcement to Samson's mother that she would bear a son to lead Israel is a foreshadowing of the announcement to Mary of the birth of the Messiah. God sent His Angel to both women and told them they would "conceive and bear a son" ([Judges 13:7](#); [Luke 1:31](#)) who would lead God's people.

God's compassionate delivery of His people despite their sin and rejection of Him presents a picture of Christ on the cross. Jesus died to deliver His people—all who would ever believe in Him—from their sin. Although most of those who followed Him during His ministry would eventually fall away and reject Him, still He remained faithful to His promise and went to the cross to die for us.

**Practical Application:** Disobedience always brings judgment. The Israelites present a perfect example of what we are not to do. Instead of learning from experience that God will always punish rebellion against Him, they continued to disobey and suffer God's displeasure and discipline. If we continue in disobedience, we invite God's discipline, not because He enjoys our suffering, but "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son" ([Hebrews 12:6](#)).

The Book of Judges is a testament to God's faithfulness. Even "if we are faithless, He will

remain faithful" ([2 Timothy 2:13](#)). Though we may be unfaithful to Him, as the Israelites were, still He is faithful to save us and preserve us ([1 Thessalonians 5:24](#)) and to forgive us when we seek forgiveness ([1 John 1:9](#)). "He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" ([1 Corinthians 1:8-9](#)).



# Summary of the Book of Ruth

**Author:** The Book of Ruth does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that the Book of Ruth was written by the Prophet Samuel. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Ruth? Who was the author of Ruth?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The exact date the Book of Ruth was written is uncertain. However, the prevalent view is a date between 1011 and 931 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Ruth was written to the Israelites. It teaches that genuine love at times may require uncompromising sacrifice. Regardless of our lot in life, we can live according to the precepts of God. Genuine love and kindness will be rewarded. God abundantly blesses those who seek to live obedient lives. Obedient living does not allow for "accidents" in God's plan. God extends mercy to the merciful.

## Key Verses:

[Ruth 1:16](#), "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 3:9](#), "'Who are you?' he asked. 'I am your servant Ruth,' she said. 'spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.'"

[Ruth 4:17](#), "The women living there said, 'Naomi has a son.' And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David."

**Brief Summary:** The setting for the Book of Ruth begins in the heathen country of Moab, a region northeast of the Dead Sea, but then moves to Bethlehem. This true account takes place during the dismal days of failure and rebellion of the Israelites, called the period of the Judges. A famine forces [Elimelech](#) and his wife, [Naomi](#), from their Israelite home to the country of Moab. Elimelech dies and Naomi is left with her two sons, who soon marry two Moabite girls, Orpah and Ruth. Later both of the sons die, and Naomi is left alone with Orpah and Ruth in a strange land. Orpah returns to her parents, but Ruth determines to stay with Naomi as they journey to Bethlehem. This story of love and devotion tells of Ruth's eventual marriage to a wealthy man named Boaz, by whom she bears a son, Obed, who becomes the grandfather of David and the ancestor of Jesus. Obedience brings Ruth into the privileged lineage of Christ.

**Foreshadowings:** A major theme of the Book of Ruth is that of the kinsman-redeemer. Boaz, a relative of Naomi on her husband's side, acted upon his duty as outlined in the Mosaic Law to redeem an impoverished relative from his or her circumstances ([Lev. 25:47-49](#)). This scenario is repeated by Christ, who redeems us, the spiritually impoverished, from the slavery of sin. Our heavenly Father sent His own Son to the cross so that we might become children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ. By being our Redeemer, He makes us His kinsmen.

**Practical Application:** The sovereignty of our great God is clearly seen in the story of Ruth. He guided her every step of the way to become His child and fulfill His plan for her to become an ancestor of Jesus Christ ([Matthew 1:5](#)). In the same way, we have assurance that God has a plan for each of us. Just as Naomi and Ruth trusted Him to provide for them, so should we.

We see in Ruth an example of the virtuous woman of [Proverbs 31](#). In addition to being devoted to her family ([Ruth 1:15-18](#); [Proverbs 31:10-12](#)) and faithfully dependent upon God ([Ruth 2:12](#); [Proverbs 31:30](#)), we see in Ruth a woman of godly speech. Her words are loving, kind and respectful, both to Naomi and to Boaz. The virtuous woman of [Proverbs 31](#) "opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness" (v. 26). We could search far and wide to find a woman today as worthy of being our role model as Ruth.

# Summary of the Book of 1 Samuel

**Author:** The author is anonymous. We know that Samuel wrote a book ([1 Samuel 10:25](#)), and it is very possible that he wrote part of this book as well. Other possible contributors to 1 Samuel are the prophets/historians Nathan and Gad ([1 Chronicles 29:29](#)).

**Date of Writing:** Originally, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were one book. The translators of the Septuagint separated them, and we have retained that separation ever since. The events of 1 Samuel span approximately 100 years, from c. 1100 B.C. to c. 1000 B.C. The events of 2 Samuel cover another 40 years. The date of writing, then, would be sometime after 960 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** First Samuel records the history of Israel in the land of Canaan as they move from the rule of judges to being a unified nation under kings. Samuel emerges as the last judge, and he anoints the first two kings, Saul and David.

## Key Verses:

"But when they said, 'Give us a king to lead us,' this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: 'Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king'" ([1 Samuel 8:6-7](#)).

"'You acted foolishly,' Samuel said. 'You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command'" ([1 Samuel 13:13-14](#)).

"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. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king'" ([1 Samuel 15:22-23](#)).

**Brief Summary:** The book of 1 Samuel can be neatly divided into two sections: the life

of Samuel (chapters 1-12) and the life of Saul (chapters 13-31).

The book starts with the miraculous birth of Samuel in answer to his mother's earnest prayer. As a child, Samuel lived and served in the temple. God singled him out as a prophet (3:19-21), and the child's first prophecy was one of judgment on the corrupt priests.

The Israelites go to war with their perennial enemies, the Philistines. The Philistines capture the ark of the covenant and are in temporary possession of it, but when the Lord sends judgment, the Philistines return the ark. Samuel calls Israel to repentance (7:3-6) and then to victory over the Philistines.

The people of Israel, wanting to be like other nations, desire a king. Samuel is displeased by their demands, but the Lord tells him that it is not Samuel's leadership they are rejecting, but His own. After warning the people of what having a king would mean, Samuel anoints a Benjamite named Saul, who is crowned in Mizpah (10:17-25).

Saul enjoys initial success, defeating the Ammonites in battle (chapter 11). But then he makes a series of missteps: he presumptuously offers a sacrifice (chapter 13), he makes a foolish vow at the expense of his son Jonathan (chapter 14), and he disobeys the Lord's direct command (chapter 15). As a result of Saul's rebellion, God chooses another to take Saul's place. Meanwhile, God removes His blessing from Saul, and an evil spirit begins goading Saul toward madness (16:14).

Samuel travels to Bethlehem to anoint a youth named David as the next king (chapter 16). Later, David has his famous confrontation with Goliath the Philistine and becomes a national hero (chapter 17). David serves in Saul's court, marries Saul's daughter, and is befriended by Saul's son. Saul himself grows jealous of David's success and popularity, and he attempts to kill David. David flees, and so begins an extraordinary period of adventure, intrigue, and romance. With supernatural aid, David narrowly but consistently eludes the bloodthirsty Saul (chapters 19-26). Through it all, David maintains his integrity and his friendship with Jonathan.

Near the end of the book, Samuel has died, and Saul is a lost man. On the eve of a battle with Philistia, Saul seeks for answers. Having rejected God, he finds no help from heaven, and he seeks counsel from a medium instead. During the seance, Samuel's spirit rises from the dead to give one last prophecy: Saul would die in battle the next day. The prophecy is fulfilled; Saul's three sons, including Jonathan, fall in battle, and Saul commits suicide.

**Foreshadowings:** The prayer of Hannah in [1 Samuel 2:1-10](#) makes several prophetic references to Christ. She extols God as her Rock (v. 2), and we know from the gospel accounts that Jesus is the Rock upon whom we should build our spiritual houses. Paul refers to Jesus as the “rock of offense” to the Jews ([Romans 9:33](#)). Christ is called the “spiritual Rock” who provided spiritual drink to the Israelites in the wilderness just as He provides “living water” to our souls ([1 Corinthians 10:4](#); [John 4:10](#)). Hannah’s prayer also makes reference to the Lord who will judge the ends of the earth (v. 2:10), while [Matthew 25:31-32](#) refers to Jesus as the Son of Man who will come in glory to judge everyone.

**Practical Application:** The tragic story of Saul is a study in wasted opportunity. Here was a man who had it all—honor, authority, riches, good looks, and more. Yet he died in despair, terrified of his enemies and knowing he had failed his nation, his family, and his God.

Saul made the mistake of thinking he could please God through disobedience. Like many today, he believed that a sensible motive will compensate for bad behavior. Perhaps his power went to his head, and he began to think he was above the rules. Somehow he developed a low opinion of God’s commands and a high opinion of himself. Even when confronted with his wrongdoing, he attempted to vindicate himself, and that’s when God rejected him (15:16-28).

Saul’s problem is one we all face—a problem of the heart. Obedience to God’s will is necessary for success, and if we in pride rebel against Him, we set ourselves up for loss.

David, on the other hand, did not seem like much at first. Even Samuel was tempted to overlook him (16:6-7). But God sees the heart and saw in David a man after His own heart (13:14). The humility and integrity of David, coupled with his boldness for the Lord and his commitment to prayer, set a good example for all of us.

# Summary of the Book of 2 Samuel

**Author:** The Book of 2 Samuel does not identify its author. It could not be the Prophet Samuel, since he died in 1 Samuel. Possible writers include Nathan and Gad (see [1 Chronicles 29:29](#)).

**Date of Writing:** Originally, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were one book. The translators of the Septuagint separated them, and we have retained that separation ever since. The events of 1 Samuel span approximately 100 years, from c. 1100 B.C. to c. 1000 B.C. The events of 2 Samuel cover another 40 years. The date of writing, then, would be sometime after 960 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** 2 Samuel is the record of King David's reign. This book places the Davidic Covenant in its historical context.

## Key Verses:

"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" ([2 Samuel 7:16](#)).

"But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" ([2 Samuel 19:4](#)).

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—from violent men you save me. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies" ([2 Samuel 22:2-4](#)).

**Brief Summary:** The book of 2 Samuel can be divided into two main sections—David's triumphs (chapters 1-10) and David's troubles (chapters 11-20). The last part of the book (chapters 21-24) is a non-chronological appendix which contains further details of David's reign.

The book begins with David receiving news of the death of Saul and his sons. He proclaims a time of mourning. Soon afterward, David is crowned king over Judah, while Ish-bosheth, one of Saul's surviving sons, is crowned king over Israel (chapter 2). A civil

war follows, but Ish-bosheth is murdered, and the Israelites ask David to reign over them as well (chapters 4-5).

David moves the country's capital from Hebron to Jerusalem and later moves the Ark of the Covenant (chapters 5-6). David's plan to build a temple in Jerusalem is vetoed by God, who then promises David the following things: 1) David would have a son to rule after him; 2) David's son would build the temple; 3) the throne occupied by David's lineage would be established forever; and 4) God would never take His mercy from David's house ([2 Samuel 7:4-16](#)).

David leads Israel to victory over many of the enemy nations which surrounded them. He also shows kindness to the family of Jonathan by taking in Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son (chapters 8-10).

Then David falls. He lusts for a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, commits adultery with her, and then has her husband murdered (chapter 11). When Nathan the prophet confronts David with his sin, David confesses, and God graciously forgives. However, the Lord tells David that trouble would arise from within his own household.

Trouble does come when David's firstborn son, Amnon, rapes his half-sister, Tamar. In retaliation, Tamar's brother Absalom kills Amnon. Absalom then flees Jerusalem rather than face his father's anger. Later, Absalom leads a revolt against David, and some of David's former associates join the rebellion (chapters 15-16). David is forced out of Jerusalem, and Absalom sets himself up as king for a short time. The usurper is overthrown, however, and—against David's wishes—is killed. David mourns his fallen son.

A general feeling of unrest plagues the remainder of David's reign. The men of Israel threaten to split from Judah, and David must suppress another uprising (chapter 20).

The book's appendix includes information concerning a three-year famine in the land (chapter 21), a song of David (chapter 22), a record of the exploits of David's bravest warriors (chapter 23), and David's sinful census and the ensuing plague (chapter 24).

**Foreshadowings:** The Lord Jesus Christ is seen primarily in two parts of 2 Samuel. First, the Davidic Covenant as outlined in [2 Samuel 7:16](#): "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" and reiterated in [Luke 1:31-33](#) in the words of the angel who appeared to Mary to announce Jesus' birth to her: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob

forever; his kingdom will never end." Christ is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant; He is the Son of God in the line of David who will reign forever.

Second, Jesus is seen in the song of David at the end of his life ([2 Samuel 22:2-51](#)). He sings of his rock, fortress and deliverer, his refuge and savior. Jesus is our Rock ([1 Corinthians 10:4](#); [1 Peter 2:7-9](#)), the Deliverer of Israel ([Romans 11:25-27](#)), the fortress to whom we "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" ([Hebrews 6:18 KJV](#)), and our only Savior ([Luke 2:11](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#)).

**Practical Application:** Anyone can fall. Even a man like David, who truly desired to follow God and who was richly blessed by God, was susceptible to temptation. David's sin with Bathsheba should be a warning to all of us to guard our hearts, our eyes, and our minds. Pride over our spiritual maturity and our ability to withstand temptation in our own strength is the first step to a downfall ([1 Corinthians 10:12](#)).

God is gracious to forgive even the most heinous sins when we truly repent. However, healing the wound caused by sin does not always erase the scar. Sin has natural consequences, and even after he was forgiven, David reaped what he had sown. His son from the illicit union with another man's wife was taken from him ([2 Samuel 12:14-24](#)) and David suffered the misery of a break in his loving relationship with his heavenly Father ([Psalms 32](#) and [51](#)). How much better to avoid sin in the first place, rather than having to seek forgiveness later!



# Summary of the Book of 1 Kings

**Author:** The Book of 1 Kings does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that it was written by the Prophet Jeremiah. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 1 Kings? Who was the author of 1 Kings?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 Kings was likely written between 560 and 540 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** This book is the sequel to 1 and 2 Samuel and begins by tracing Solomon's rise to kingship after the death of David. The story begins with a united kingdom, but ends in a nation divided into 2 kingdoms, known as Judah and Israel. 1 and 2 Kings are combined into one book in the Hebrew Bible.

## Key Verses:

[1 Kings 1:30](#), "I will surely carry out today what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place."

[1 Kings 9:3](#), "The LORD said to him: 'I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.'"

[1 Kings 12:16](#), "When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king: 'What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, O Israel! Look after your own house, O David!'"

[1 Kings 12:28](#), "After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'"

[1 Kings 17:1](#), "Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.'"

**Brief Summary:** The book of 1 Kings starts with Solomon and ends with Elijah. The difference between the two gives you an idea as to what lies between. Solomon was born after a palace scandal between David and Bathsheba. Like his father, he had a

weakness for women that would bring him down. Solomon did well at first, praying for wisdom and building a temple to God that took seven years to construct. But then he spent thirteen years building a palace for himself. His accumulation of many wives led him to worship their idols and away from God. After Solomon's death, Israel was ruled by a series of kings, most of whom were evil and idolatrous. The nation fell further away from God, and even the preaching of Elijah could not bring them back. Among the most evil kings were Ahab and his queen, Jezebel, who brought the worship of Baal to new heights in Israel. Elijah tried to turn the Israelites back to the worship of Yahweh, challenging the idolatrous priests of Baal to a showdown with God on Mount Carmel. Of course, God won. This made Queen Jezebel angry (to say the least). She ordered Elijah's death, so he ran away and hid in the wilderness. Depressed and exhausted, he said, "Let me die." But God sent food and encouragement to the prophet and whispered to him in a "quiet gentle sound" and in the process saved his life for further work.

**Foreshadowings:** The Temple in Jerusalem, where God's Spirit would dwell in the Holy of Holies, foreshadows believers in Christ in whom the Holy Spirit resides from the moment of our salvation. Just as the Israelites were to forsake idolatry, so are we to put away anything that separates us from God. We are His people, the very temple of the living God. [Second Corinthians 6:16](#) tells us, "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"

Elijah the prophet was the forerunner of Christ and the Apostles of the New Testament. God enabled Elijah to do miraculous things in order to prove that he was truly a man of God. He raised from the dead the son of the widow of Zarephath, causing her to exclaim, "'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth.'" In the same way, men of God who spoke His words through His power are evident in the New Testament. Not only did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, but He also raised the son of the widow of [Nain \(Luke 7:14-15\)](#) and Jairus' daughter ([Luke 8:52-56](#)). The Apostle Peter raised Dorcas ([Acts 9:40](#)) and Paul raised Eutychus ([Acts 20:9-12](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of 1 Kings has many lessons for believers. We see a warning about the company we keep, and especially in regard to close associations and marriage. The kings of Israel who, like Solomon, married foreign women exposed themselves and the people they ruled to evil. As believers in Christ, we must be very careful about whom we choose as friends, business associates, and spouses. "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character" ([1 Corinthians 15:33](#)).

Elijah's experience in the wilderness also teaches a valuable lesson. After his incredible victory over the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, his joy turned to sorrow when he was pursued by Jezebel and fled for his life. Such "mountaintop" experiences are often followed by a letdown and the depression and discouragement that can follow. We have to be on guard for this type of experience in the Christian life. But our God is faithful and will never leave or forsake us. The quiet, gentle sound that encouraged Elijah will encourage us.

# Summary of the Book of 2 Kings

**Author:** The Book of 2 Kings does not name its author. The tradition is that the prophet Jeremiah was the author of both 1 and 2 Kings.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 Kings, along with 1 Kings, was likely written between 560 and 540 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of 2 Kings is a sequel to the Book of 1 Kings. It continues the story of the kings over the divided kingdom (Israel and Judah.) The Book of 2 Kings concludes with the final overthrow and deportation of the people of Israel and Judah to Assyria and Babylon, respectively.

## Key Verses:

[2 Kings 17:7-8](#): "All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced."

[2 Kings 22:1a-2](#): "Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left."

[2 Kings 24:2](#): "The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets."

[2 Kings 8:19](#): "Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever."

**Brief Summary:** Second Kings depicts the downfall of the divided kingdom. Prophets continue to warn the people that the judgment of God is at hand, but they will not repent. The kingdom of Israel is repeatedly ruled by wicked kings, and, even though a few of Judah's kings are good, the majority of them lead the people away from worship of the Lord. These few good rulers, along with God's prophets, cannot stop the nation's

decline. The Northern Kingdom of Israel is eventually destroyed by the Assyrians, and about 136 years later the Southern Kingdom of Judah is destroyed by the Babylonians.

There are three prominent themes present in the Book of 2 Kings. First, the Lord will judge His people when they disobey and turn their backs on Him. The Israelites' unfaithfulness was reflected in the evil idolatry of the kings and resulted in God exercising His righteous wrath against their rebellion. Second, the word of the true prophets of God always comes to pass. Because the Lord always keeps His word, so too are the words of His prophets always true. Third, the Lord is faithful. He remembered His promise to David ([2 Samuel 7:10-13](#)), and, despite the disobedience of the people and the evil kings who ruled them, the Lord did not bring David's family to an end.

**Foreshadowings:** Jesus uses the stories of the widow of Zarephath from 1 Kings and Naaman in 2 Kings to illustrate the great truth of God's compassion toward those the Jews deemed unworthy of God's grace—the poor, the weak, the oppressed, tax collectors, Samaritans, Gentiles. By citing the examples of a poor widow and a leper, Jesus showed Himself to be the Great Physician who heals and ministers to those in the greatest need of divine sovereign grace. This same truth was the basis of the mystery of the body of Christ, His Church, which would be drawn from all levels of society, male and female, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile ([Ephesians 3:1-6](#)).

Many of the miracles of Elisha foreshadowed those of Jesus Himself. Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son ([2 Kings 4:34-35](#)), healed Naaman of leprosy ([2 Kings 5:1-19](#)), and multiplied loaves of bread to feed a hundred people with some left over ([2 Kings 4:42-44](#)).

**Practical Application:** God hates sin and He will not allow it to continue indefinitely. If we belong to Him, we can expect His discipline when we disobey Him. A loving Father corrects His children for their benefit and to prove that they indeed belong to Him. God may at times use unbelievers to bring correction to His people, and He gives us warning before delivering judgment. As Christians, we have His Word to guide us and warn us when we go astray from His path. Like the prophets of old, His Word is trustworthy and always speaks truth. God's faithfulness to His people will never fail, even when we do.

The stories of the widow and the leper are examples for us in regard to the Body of Christ. Just as Elisha had pity on these from the lowest levels of society, we are to welcome all who belong to Christ into our churches. God is no "respector of persons" ([Acts 10:34](#)), and neither should we be.

# Summary of the Book of 1 Chronicles

**Author:** The Book of 1 Chronicles does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that 1 and 2 Chronicles were written by Ezra.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 Chronicles was likely written between 450 and 425 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Books of 1 & 2 Chronicles cover mostly the same information as 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. Perhaps the biggest distinction is that 1 & 2 Chronicles focus more on the priestly aspect of the time period. The Book of 1 Chronicles was written after the exile to help those returning to Israel understand how to worship God. The history focused on the Southern Kingdom, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. These tribes tended to be more faithful to God.

## Key Verses:

[1 Chronicles 11:1-2](#), "All Israel came together to David at Hebron and said, 'We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, even while Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the Lord said to you, "You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'""

[1 Chronicles 21:13](#), "David said to Gad, 'I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.'"

[1 Chronicles 29:11](#), "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."

**Brief Summary:** The first 9 chapters of 1 Chronicles are dedicated to lists and genealogies. Further lists and genealogies are scattered throughout the rest of 1 Chronicles. In between, the Book of 1 Chronicles records David's ascension to the throne and his actions thereafter. The book concludes with David's son Solomon becoming King of Israel. Briefly outlined, the Book of 1 Chronicles is as follows: Chapters 1:1-9:23 - Selective Genealogies; Chapters 9:24-12:40 - David's ascent; Chapters 13:1-20:30 - David's reign.

**Foreshadowings:** In David's song of thanksgiving to God in [1 Chronicles 16:33](#), he refers to the time when God will come "to judge the earth." This foreshadows [Matthew 25](#), in which Jesus describes the time when He will come to judge the earth. Through the parables of the ten virgins and the talents, He warns that those who are found without the blood of Christ covering their sins will be cast into "outer darkness." He encourages His people to be ready because when He comes, He will separate the sheep from the goats in judgment.

Part of the Davidic Covenant which God reiterates in chapter 17 refers to the future Messiah who would be a descendant of David. Verses 13-14 describe the Son who will be established in God's house and whose throne will be established forever. This can only refer to Jesus Christ.

**Practical Application:** Genealogies such as the ones in 1 Chronicles may seem dry to us, but they remind us that God knows each of His children personally, even down to the number of hairs on our heads ([Matthew 10:30](#)). We can take comfort in the fact that who we are and what we do is written forever in God's mind. If we belong to Christ, our names are written forever in the Lamb's book of Life ([Revelation 13:8](#)).

God is faithful to His people and keeps His promises. In the Book of 1 Chronicles, we see the fulfillment of God's promise to David when he is made king over all Israel ([1 Chronicles 11:1-3](#)). We can be sure that His promises to us will be fulfilled as well. He has promised blessings to those who follow Him, who come to Christ in repentance, and who obey His Word.

Obedience brings blessing; disobedience brings judgment. The Book of 1 Chronicles, as well as 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings, is a chronicle of the pattern of sin, repentance, forgiveness, and restoration of the nation of Israel. In the same way, God is patient with us and forgives our sin when we come to Him in true repentance ([1 John 1:9](#)). We can take comfort in the fact that He hears our prayer of sorrow, forgives our sin, restores us to fellowship with Him, and sets us on the path to joy.

# Summary of the Book of 2 Chronicles

**Author:** The Book of 2 Chronicles does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that 1 and 2 Chronicles were written by Ezra.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 Chronicles was likely written between 450 and 425 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Books of 1 & 2 Chronicles cover mostly the same information as 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. The Books of 1 & 2 Chronicles focus more on the priestly aspect of the time period. The Book of 2 Chronicles is essentially an evaluation of the nation's religious history.

## Key Verses:

[2 Chronicles 2:1](#), "Solomon gave orders to build a temple for the Name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself."

[2 Chronicles 29:1-3](#), "Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the LORD and repaired them."

[2 Chronicles 36:14](#), "Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem."

[2 Chronicles 36:23](#), "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you—may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.'"

**Brief Summary:** The Book of 2 Chronicles records the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, from the reign of Solomon to the conclusion of the Babylonian exile. The decline of Judah is disappointing, but emphasis is given to the spiritual reformers who zealously seek to turn the people back to God. Little is said about the bad kings or of



the failures of good kings; only goodness is stressed. Since 2 Chronicles takes a priestly perspective, the Northern Kingdom of Israel is rarely mentioned because of her false worship and refusal to acknowledge the Temple of Jerusalem. Second Chronicles concludes with the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

**Foreshadowings:** As with all references to kings and temples in the Old Testament, we see in them a reflection of the true King of Kings—Jesus Christ—and of the temple of the Holy Spirit—His people. Even the best of the kings of Israel had the faults of all sinful men and led the people imperfectly. But when the King of Kings comes to live and reign on the earth in the [millennium](#), He will establish Himself on the throne of all the earth as the rightful heir of David. Only then will we have a perfect King who will reign in righteousness and holiness, something the best of Israel's kings could only dream of.

Similarly, the great temple built by Solomon was not designed to last forever. Just 150 years later, it was in need of repair from decay and defacing by future generations who turned back to idolatry ([2 Kings 12](#)). But the temple of the Holy Spirit—those who belong to Christ—will live forever. We who belong to Jesus are that temple, made not by hands but by the will of God ([John 1:12-13](#)). The Spirit who lives within us will never depart from us and will deliver us safely into the hands of God one day ([Ephesians 1:13; 4:30](#)). No earthly temple contains that promise.

**Practical Application:** The reader of the Chronicles is invited to evaluate each generation from the past and discern why each was blessed for their obedience or punished for their wickedness. But we are also to compare the plight of these generations to our own, both corporately and individually. If we or our nation or our church is experiencing hardships, it is to our benefit to compare our beliefs and how we act upon those beliefs with the experiences of the Israelites under the various kings. God hates sin and will not tolerate it. But if the Chronicles teach us anything, it is that God desires to forgive and heal those who will humbly pray and repent ([1 John 1:9](#)).

If you could have anything you wished from God, what would you ask for? Fabulous wealth? Perfect health for you and your loved ones? The power over life and death? Amazing to think about it, isn't it? But more amazing is that God made such an offer to Solomon and he chose none of these things. What he asked for was wisdom and knowledge to complete the task God had assigned to him and to do it well. The lesson for us is that God has given each of us a commission to fulfill and the greatest blessing we can seek from God is the ability to carry out His will for our lives. For that, we need the "wisdom from above" ([James 3:17](#)) to discern His will, as well as the understanding and intimate knowledge of Him in order to motivate us to Christlikeness in both deed and attitude ([James 3:13](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Ezra

**Author:** The Book of Ezra does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that the prophet Ezra wrote the Book of Ezra. It is interesting to note that once Ezra appears on the scene in chapter 7, the author of the Book of Ezra switches from writing in the third person to first person. This would also lend credibility to Ezra being the author. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Ezra? Who was the author of Ezra?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Ezra was likely written between 460 and 440 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Ezra is devoted to events occurring in the land of Israel at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity and subsequent years, covering a period of approximately one century, beginning in 538 B.C. The emphasis in Ezra is on the rebuilding of the Temple. The book contains extensive genealogical records, principally for the purpose of establishing the claims to the priesthood on the part of the descendants of Aaron.

## Key Verses:

[Ezra 3:11](#) "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 7:6](#), "...this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him."

**Brief Summary:** The book may be divided as follows: Chapters 1-6—The First Return under Zerubbabel, and the Building of the Second Temple. Chapters 7-10—The Ministry of Ezra. Since well over half a century elapsed between chapters 6 and 7, the characters of the first part of the book had died by the time Ezra began his ministry in Jerusalem. Ezra is the one person who is prominent in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Both books end with prayers of confession ([Ezra 9](#); [Nehemiah 9](#)) and a subsequent separation of the people from the sinful practices into which they had fallen. Some concept of the nature of the encouraging messages of Haggai and Zechariah, who are introduced in this narrative ([Ezra 5:1](#)), may be seen in the prophetic books that bear their names.

The Book of Ezra covers the return from captivity to rebuild the Temple up to the decree

of Artaxerxes, the event covered at the beginning of the Book of Nehemiah. Haggai was the main prophet in the day of Ezra, and Zechariah was the prophet in the day of Nehemiah.

**Foreshadowings:** We see in the Book of Ezra a continuation of the biblical theme of the remnant. Whenever disaster or judgment falls, God always saves a tiny remnant for Himself—Noah and his family from the destruction of the flood; Lot's family from Sodom and Gomorrah; the 7,000 prophets reserved in Israel despite the persecution of Ahab and Jezebel. When the Israelites were taken into captivity in Egypt, God delivered His remnant and took them to the Promised Land. Some fifty thousand people return to the land of Judea in [Ezra 2:64-67](#), and yet, as they compare themselves with the numbers in Israel during its prosperous days under King David, their comment is, "We are left this day as a remnant." The remnant theme is carried into the New Testament where Paul tells us that "at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace" ([Romans 11:5](#)). Although most people of Jesus' day rejected Him, there remained a set of people whom God had reserved and preserved in his Son, and in the covenant of His grace. Throughout all generations since Christ, there is the remnant of the faithful whose feet are on the narrow road that leads to eternal life ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)). This remnant will be preserved through the power of the Holy Spirit who has sealed them and who will deliver them safely at the last day ([2 Corinthians 1:22](#); [Ephesians 4:30](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of Ezra is a chronicle of hope and restoration. For the Christian whose life is scarred by sin and rebellion against God, there is great hope that ours is a God of forgiveness, a God who will not turn His back on us when we seek Him in repentance and brokenness ([1 John 1:9](#)). The return of the Israelites to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple are repeated in the life of every Christian who returns from the captivity of sin and rebellion against God and finds in Him a loving welcome home. No matter how long we have been away, He is ready to forgive us and receive us back into His family. He is willing to show us how to rebuild our lives and resurrect our hearts, wherein is the temple of the Holy Spirit. As with the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, God superintends the work of renovating and rededicating our lives to His service.

The opposition of the adversaries of God to the rebuilding of the temple displays a pattern that is typical of that of the enemy of our souls. Satan uses those who would appear to be in sync with God's purposes to deceive us and attempt to thwart God's plans. [Ezra 4:2](#) describes the deceptive speech of those who claim to worship Christ but whose real intent is to tear down, not to build up. We are to be on guard against such deceivers, respond to them as the Israelites did, and refuse to be fooled by their smooth words and false professions of faith.

# Summary of the Book of Nehemiah

**Author:** The book of Nehemiah does not specifically name its author, but Jewish and Christian traditions recognize either Ezra or Nehemiah as the author. It is likely that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Nehemiah? Who was the author of Nehemiah?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Nehemiah was likely written between 445 and 420 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Nehemiah, one of the history books of the Bible, continues the story of Israel's return from the Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

## Key Verses:

[Nehemiah 1:3](#), "They said to me, 'Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.'"

[Nehemiah 1:11](#), "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

[Nehemiah 6:15-16](#), "So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God."

**Brief Summary:** Nehemiah was a Hebrew in Persia when the word reached him that the Temple in Jerusalem was being reconstructed. He grew anxious knowing there was no wall to protect the city. Nehemiah invited God to use him to save the city. God answered his prayer by softening the heart of the Persian king, Artaxerxes, who gave not only his blessing, but also supplies to be used in the project. Nehemiah is given permission by the king to return to Jerusalem, where he is made governor.

In spite of opposition and accusations the wall was built and the enemies silenced. The

people, inspired by Nehemiah, give tithes of much money, supplies, and manpower to complete the wall in a remarkable 52 days, despite much opposition. This united effort is short-lived, however, because Jerusalem falls back into apostasy when Nehemiah leaves for a while. When he returned to Jerusalem, Nehemiah found the walls strong but the people weak. He set about the task of teaching the people morality and he didn't mince words. "I argued with those people, put curses on them, hit some of them and pulled out their hair" (13:25). He reestablishes true worship through prayer and by encouraging the people to revival by reading and adhering to the Word of God.

**Foreshadowings:** Nehemiah was a man of prayer and he prayed passionately for his people ([Nehemiah 1](#)). His zealous intercession for God's people foreshadows our great Intercessor, Jesus Christ, who prayed fervently for His people in His high-priestly prayer in [John 17](#). Both Nehemiah and Jesus had a burning love for God's people which they poured out in prayer to God, interceding for them before the throne.

**Practical Application:** Nehemiah led the Israelites into a respect and love for the text of Scripture. Nehemiah, because of his love for God and his desire to see God honored and glorified, led the Israelites towards the faith and obedience God had desired for them for so long. In the same way, Christians are to love and revere the truths of Scripture, commit them to memory, meditate on them day and night, and turn to them for the fulfillment of every spiritual need. [Second Timothy 3:16-17](#) tells us, "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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If we expect to experience the spiritual revival of the Israelites ([Nehemiah 8:1-8](#)), we must begin with God's Word.

Each of us ought to have genuine compassion for others who have spiritual or physical hurts. To feel compassion, yet do nothing to help, is unfounded biblically. At times we may have to give up our own comfort in order to minister properly to others. We must totally believe in a cause before we will give our time or money to it with the right heart. When we allow God to minister through us, even unbelievers will know it is God's work.

# Summary of the Book of Esther

**Author:** The Book of Esther does not specifically name its author. The most popular traditions are Mordecai (a major character in the Book of Esther), Ezra, and Nehemiah (who would have been familiar with Persian customs). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Esther? Who was the author of Esther?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Esther was likely written between 460 and 350 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The purpose of the Book of Esther is to display the providence of God, especially in regard to His chosen people, Israel. The Book of Esther records the institution of the Feast of Purim and the obligation of its perpetual observation. The Book of Esther was read at the Feast of Purim to commemorate the great deliverance of the Jewish nation brought about by God through Esther. Jews today still read Esther during Purim.

## Key Verses:

[Esther 2:15](#) - Now when the time came for Esther to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested.

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

[Esther 6:13](#) - Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has begun, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him - you will surely come to ruin!

[Esther 7:3](#) - If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life - this is my petition, and the life of my people - this is my request.

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Esther can be divided into three main sections. Chapters 1:1-2:18 – Esther replaces Vashti; 2:19-7:10 – Mordecai overcomes Haman; 8:1-10:3 – Israel survives Haman's attempt to destroy them. The noble Esther risked her own death as she realized what was at stake. She willingly did what could have been a deadly maneuver and took on the second-in-command of her husband's kingdom, Haman. She proved a wise and most worthy opponent, all the while remaining humble and

respectful of the position of her husband-king.

Esther's story is much like the story of Joseph in [Genesis 41](#). Both stories involve foreign monarchs who control the destiny of the Jews. Both accounts show the heroism of Israelite individuals who provide the means for the salvation of their people and nation. The hand of God is evident, in that what appears to be a bad situation is indeed very much under the control of the Almighty God, who ultimately has the good of the people at heart. At the center of this story is the ongoing division between the Jews and the Amalekites, which was recorded to have begun in the Book of Exodus. Haman's goal is the final effort recorded in the Old Testament period of the complete eradication of the Jews. His plans eventually end up with his own demise, and the elevation of his enemy Mordecai to his own position, as well as the salvation of the Jews.

Feasting is a major theme of this book: there are seven recorded banquets ([Esther 1:3, 9; 2:18; 5:4-5; 7:1-2; 8:17; and 9:17-22](#)), and many of the events were planned, plotted, or exposed at these banquets. Although the name of [God is never mentioned in this book](#), it is apparent that the Jews of Susa sought His intervention when they fasted for three days ([Esther 4:16](#)). In spite of the fact that the law allowing their destruction was written according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, rendering it unchangeable, the way was cleared for their prayers to be answered. Esther risked her life by going not once uninvited before the king but twice, ([Esther 5:1-2; 8:3](#)). She was not content with the destruction of Haman; she was intent on saving her people. The institution of the Feast of Purim is written and preserved for all to see and is still observed today. God's chosen people, without any direct mention of His name, were granted a stay of execution through the wisdom and humility of Esther.

**Foreshadowings:** In Esther, we are given a behind-the-scenes look at the ongoing struggle of Satan against the purposes of God and especially against His promised Messiah. The entrance of Christ into the human race was predicated upon the existence of the Jewish race. Just as Haman plotted against the Jews in order to destroy them, so has Satan set himself against Christ and God's people. Just as Haman is defeated on the gallows he built for Mordecai, so does Christ use the very weapon that his enemy devised to destroy Him and His spiritual seed. For the cross, by which Satan planned to destroy the Messiah, was the very means through which Christ "having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" ([Colossians 2:14-15](#)). Just as Haman was hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai, so the devil was crushed by the cross he erected to destroy Christ.

**Practical Application:** The Book of Esther shows the choice we make between seeing the hand of God in our circumstances in life and seeing things as merely coincidence. God is the sovereign Ruler of the universe and we can be assured that His plans will not be moved by the actions of mere evil men. Although His name is not mentioned in the book, His providential care for His people, both individuals and the nation, is evident throughout. For instance, we cannot fail to see the Almighty exerting influence over King Xerxes' timely insomnia. Through the example of Mordecai and Esther, the silent love language our Father often uses to communicate directly to our spirits is shown in this book.

Esther proved to have a godly and teachable spirit that also showed great strength and willing obedience. Esther's humility was markedly different from the attitude of those around her, and this caused her to be elevated into the position of queen. She shows us that remaining respectful and humble, even in difficult if not humanly impossible circumstances, often sets us up to be the vessel of untold blessing for both ourselves and others. We would do well to emulate her godly attitudes in all areas of life, but especially in trials. Not once is there a complaint or bad attitude exposed in the writing. Many times we read she won the "favor" of those around her. Such favor is what ultimately saved her people. We can be granted such favor as we accept even unfair persecution and follow Esther's example of maintaining a positive attitude, coupled with humility and the determination to lean on God. Who knows but that God put us in such a position, for just such a time as this?



# Summary of the Book of Job

**Author:** The Book of Job does not specifically name its author. The most likely candidates are Job, Elihu, Moses, and Solomon. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Job? Who was the author of Job?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The date of the authorship of the Book of Job would be determined by the author of the Book of Job. If Moses was the author, the date would be around 1440 B.C. If Solomon was the author, the date would be around 950 B.C. Because we don't know the author, we can't know the date of writing.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Job helps us to understand the following: Satan cannot bring financial and physical destruction upon us unless it is by God's permission. God has power over what Satan can and cannot do. It is beyond our human ability to understand the "why's" behind all the suffering in the world. The wicked will receive their just dues. We cannot always blame suffering and sin on our lifestyles. Suffering may sometimes be allowed in our lives to purify, test, teach, or strengthen the soul. God remains enough, and He deserves and requests our love and praise in all circumstances of life.

## Key Verses

[Job 1:1](#), "In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil."

[Job 1:21](#), "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

[Job 38:1-2](#), "Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said, 'Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?'"

[Job 42:5-6](#), "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

**Brief Summary:** At the beginning of the book of Job is a scene in heaven where Satan stands before God. God asks Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?" ([Job 1:8](#)), and Satan immediately accuses Job, a righteous man, of fearing God only because God had prospered him. "Strike everything he has," Satan says, "and he will surely curse you

to your face" ([Job 1:11](#)). God grants Satan limited permission to put Job to the test. Why do the righteous suffer? This is the question raised after Job loses his family, his wealth, and his health. Job's three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, come to "comfort" him and to discuss his crushing series of tragedies. They insist his suffering is punishment for sin in his life. Job, though, remains devoted to God through all of this and contends that his life has not been one of sin. A fourth man, Elihu, tells Job he needs to humble himself and submit to God's use of trials to purify his life. Finally, Job questions God Himself and learns valuable lessons about the sovereignty of God and his need to totally trust in the Lord. Job is then restored to health, happiness, and prosperity beyond his earlier state.

**Foreshadowings:** As Job was pondering the cause of his misery, three questions came to his mind, all of which are answered only in our Lord Jesus Christ. These questions occur in chapter 14. First, in verse 4, Job asks, "Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!?" Job's question comes from a heart that recognizes it cannot possibly please God or become justified in His sight. God is holy; we are not. Therefore, a great gulf exists between man and God, caused by sin. But the answer to Job's anguished question is found in Jesus Christ. He has paid the penalty for our sin and has exchanged it for His righteousness, thereby making us acceptable in God's sight ([Hebrews 10:14](#); [Colossians 1:21-23](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

Job's second question, "But man dies and lies prostrate; Man expires, and where is he?" (vs. 10), is another question about eternity and life and death that is answered only in Christ. With Christ, the answer to 'where is he?' is eternal life in heaven. Without Christ, the answer is an eternity in "outer darkness" where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" ([Matthew 25:30](#)).

Job's third question, found in verse 14, is "If a man dies, will he live again?" Once again, the answer is found in Christ. We do indeed live again if we are in Him. "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'" ([1 Corinthians 15:54-55](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of Job reminds us that there is a "cosmic conflict" going on behind the scenes that we usually know nothing about. Often we wonder why God allows something, and we question or doubt God's goodness, without seeing the full picture. The Book of Job teaches us to trust God under all circumstances. We must trust God, not only WHEN we do not understand, but BECAUSE we do not understand. The psalmist tells us, "As for God, His way is perfect" ([Psalm 18:30](#)). If God's ways are

“perfect,” then we can trust that whatever He does—and whatever He allows—is also perfect. This may not seem possible to us, but our minds are not God’s mind. It is true that we can’t expect to understand His mind perfectly, as He reminds us, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#)). Nevertheless, our responsibility to God is to obey Him, to trust Him, and to submit to His will, whether we understand it or not.

# Summary of the Book of Psalms

**Author:** The brief descriptions that introduce the psalms have David listed as author in 73 instances. David's personality and identity are clearly stamped on many of these psalms. While it is clear that David wrote many of the individual psalms, he is definitely not the author of the entire collection. Two of the psalms (72 and 127) are attributed to Solomon, David's son and successor. [Psalm 90](#) is a prayer assigned to Moses. Another group of 12 psalms (50) and (73—83) is ascribed to the family of [Asaph](#). The [sons of Korah](#) wrote 11 psalms (42, 44—49, 84—85, 87—88). [Psalm 88](#) is attributed to Heman, while [Psalm 89](#) is assigned to Ethan the Ezrahite. With the exception of Solomon and Moses, all these additional authors were priests or Levites who were responsible for providing music for sanctuary worship during David's reign. Fifty of the psalms designate no specific person as author, although two of those are designated elsewhere in the Bible as psalms of David. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Psalms? Who was the author of Psalms?](#)

**Date of Writing:** A careful examination of the authorship question, as well as the subject matter covered by the psalms themselves, reveals that they span a period of many centuries. The oldest psalm in the collection is probably the prayer of Moses (90), a reflection on the frailty of man as compared to the eternity of God. The latest psalm is probably (137), a song of lament clearly written during the days when the Hebrews were being held captive by the Babylonians, from about 586 to 538 B.C.

It is clear that the 150 individual psalms were written by many different people across a period of a thousand years in Israel's history. They must have been compiled and put together in their present form by some unknown editor shortly after the captivity ended about 537 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Psalms has far more "chapters" than any other book in the Bible, with 150 individual psalms. It is also one of the most diverse, since the psalms deal with such subjects as God and His creation, war, worship, wisdom, sin and evil, judgment, justice, and the coming of the Messiah.

## Key Verses:

[Psalm 19:1](#) "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

[Psalm 22:16-19](#), "Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."

[Psalm 23:1](#), "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."

[Psalm 29:1-2](#), "Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness."

[Psalm 51:10](#), "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

[Psalm 119:1-2](#), "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Psalms is a collection of prayers, poems, and hymns that focus the worshiper's thoughts on God in praise and adoration. Parts of this book were used as a hymnal in the worship services of ancient Israel. The musical heritage of the psalms is demonstrated by its title. It comes from a Greek word which means "a song sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument."

**Foreshadowings:** God's provision of a Savior for His people is a recurring theme in the Psalms. Prophetic pictures of the Messiah are seen in numerous psalms. [Psalm 2:1-12](#) portrays the Messiah's triumph and kingdom. [Psalm 16:8-11](#) foreshadows His death and resurrection. [Psalm 22](#) shows us the suffering Savior on the cross and presents detailed prophecies of the crucifixion, all of which were fulfilled perfectly. The glories of the Messiah and His bride are on exhibit in [Psalm 45:6-7](#), while [Psalms 72:6-17](#), [89:3-37](#), [110:1-7](#) and [132:12-18](#) present the glory and universality of His reign.

**Practical Application:** One of the results of being filled with the Spirit or the word of Christ is singing. The psalms are the "songbook" of the early church that reflected the new truth in Christ.

God is the same Lord in all the psalms. But we respond to Him in different ways, according to the specific circumstances of our lives. What a marvelous God we worship, the psalmist declares, high and lifted up beyond our human experiences but also close enough to touch and who walks beside us along life's way.

We can bring all our feelings to God—no matter how negative or complaining they may

be—and we can rest assured that He will hear and understand. The psalmist teaches us that the most profound prayer of all is a cry for help as we find ourselves overwhelmed by the problems of life.

# Summary of the Book of Proverbs

**Author:** King Solomon is the principal writer of Proverbs. Solomon's name appears in 1:1, 10:1, and 25:1. We may also presume Solomon collected and edited proverbs other than his own, for [Ecclesiastes 12:9](#) says, "Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs." Indeed, the Hebrew title Mishle Shelomoh is translated "Proverbs of Solomon." Full article: [Who wrote the book of Proverbs? Who was the author of Proverbs?](#)

**Date of Writing:** Solomon's proverbs were penned around 900 B.C. During his reign as king, the nation of Israel reached its pinnacle spiritually, politically, culturally, and economically. As Israel's reputation soared, so did King Solomon's. Foreign dignitaries from the far reaches of the known world traveled great distances to hear the wise monarch speak ([1 Kings 4:34](#)).

**Purpose of Writing:** Knowledge is nothing more than an accumulation of raw facts, but wisdom is the ability to see people, events, and situations as God sees them. In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon reveals the mind of God in matters high and lofty and in common, ordinary, everyday situations, too. It appears that no topic escaped King Solomon's attention. Matters pertaining to personal conduct, sexual relations, business, wealth, charity, ambition, discipline, debt, child-rearing, character, alcohol, politics, revenge, and godliness are among the many topics covered in this rich collection of wise sayings.

## Key Verses:

[Proverbs 1:5](#), "Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance."

[Proverbs 1:7](#), "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."

[Proverbs 4:5](#), "Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them."

[Proverbs 8:13-14](#), "To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil

behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power."

**Brief Summary:** Summarizing the Book of Proverbs is a bit difficult, for unlike many other books of Scripture, there is no particular plot or storyline found in its pages; likewise, there are no principal characters in the book. It is wisdom that takes center stage—a grand, divine wisdom that transcends the whole of history, peoples, and cultures. Even a perfunctory reading of this magnificent treasury reveals the pithy sayings of the wise King Solomon are as relevant today as they were some three thousand years ago.

**Foreshadowings:** The theme of wisdom and its necessity in our lives finds its fulfillment in Christ. We are continually exhorted in Proverbs to seek wisdom, get wisdom, and understand wisdom. Proverbs also tells us—and repeats it— that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (1:7; 9:10). Our fear of the Lord's wrath and justice is what drives us to Christ, who is the embodiment of God's wisdom as expressed in His glorious plan of redemption for mankind. In Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" ([Colossians 2:3](#)), we find the answer to our search for wisdom, the remedy for our fear of God, and the "righteousness, holiness and redemption" that we so desperately need ([1 Corinthians 1:30](#)). The wisdom that is found only in Christ is in contrast to the foolishness of the world which encourages us to be wise in our own eyes. But Proverbs also tells us that the world's way is not God's way ([Proverbs 3:7](#)) and leads only to death ([Proverbs 14:12](#); [16:25](#)).

**Practical Application:** There is an undeniable practicality found in this book, for sound and sensible answers to all manner of complex difficulties are found within its thirty-one chapters. Certainly, Proverbs is the greatest "how-to" book ever written, and those who have the good sense to take Solomon's lessons to heart will quickly discover godliness, prosperity, and contentment are theirs for the asking.

The recurring principle of the Book of Proverbs is that those who choose wisdom and follow God will be blessed in numerous ways: with long life (9:11); prosperity (2:20-22); joy (3:13-18); and the goodness of God (12:21). Those who reject Him, on the other hand, suffer shame and death (3:35; 10:21). To reject God is to choose folly over wisdom and is to separate ourselves from God, His Word, His wisdom, and His blessings.



# Summary of the Book of Ecclesiastes

**Author:** The Book of Ecclesiastes does not directly identify its author. There are quite a few verses that imply Solomon wrote this book. There are some clues in the context that may suggest a different person wrote the book after Solomon's death, possibly several hundred years later. Still, the conventional belief is that the author is indeed Solomon. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes? Who was the author of Ecclesiastes?](#)

**Date of Writing:** Solomon's reign as king of Israel lasted from around 970 B.C. to around 930 B.C. The Book of Ecclesiastes was likely written towards the end of his reign, approximately 935 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Ecclesiastes is a book of perspective. The narrative of "the Preacher" (KJV), or "the Teacher" (NIV) reveals the depression that inevitably results from seeking happiness in worldly things. This book gives Christians a chance to see the world through the eyes of a person who, though very wise, is trying to find meaning in temporary, human things. Most every form of worldly pleasure is explored by the Preacher, and none of it gives him a sense of meaning.

In the end, the Preacher comes to accept that faith in God is the only way to find personal meaning. He decides to accept the fact that life is brief and ultimately worthless without God. The Preacher advises the reader to focus on an eternal God instead of temporary pleasure.

## Key Verses:

[Ecclesiastes 1:2](#), "'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher, 'vanity of vanities, all is vanity'" (NKJV).

[Ecclesiastes 1:18](#), "For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief."

[Ecclesiastes 2:11](#), "Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun."

[Ecclesiastes 12:1](#), "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'"

[Ecclesiastes 12:13](#), "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

**Brief Summary:** Two phrases are repeated often in Ecclesiastes. The word translated as "vanity" in the KJV, and "meaningless" in the NIV appears often, and is used to emphasize the temporary nature of worldly things. In the end, even the most impressive human achievements will be left behind. The phrase "under the sun" occurs 28 times, and refers to the mortal world. When the Preacher refers to "all things under the sun," he is talking about earthly, temporary, human things.

The first seven chapters of the book of Ecclesiastes describe all of the worldly things "under the sun" that the Preacher tries to find fulfillment in. He tries scientific discovery (1:10-11), wisdom and philosophy (1:13-18), mirth (2:1), alcohol (2:3), architecture (2:4), property (2:7-8), and luxury (2:8). The Preacher turned his mind towards different philosophies to find meaning, such as materialism (2:19-20), and even moral codes (including chapters 8-9). He found that everything was meaningless, a temporary diversion that, without God, had no purpose or longevity.

Chapters 8-12 of Ecclesiastes describe the Preacher's suggestions and comments on how a life should be lived. He comes to the conclusion that without God, there is no truth or meaning to life. He has seen many evils and realized that even the best of man's achievements are worth nothing in the long run. So he advises the reader to acknowledge God from youth (12:1) and to follow His will (12:13-14).

**Foreshadowings:** For all of the vanities described in the Book of Ecclesiastes, the answer is Christ. According to [Ecclesiastes 3:17](#), God judges the righteous and the wicked, and the righteous are only those who are in Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). God has placed the desire for eternity in our hearts ([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)) and has provided the Way to eternal life through Christ ([John 3:16](#)). We are reminded that striving after the world's wealth is not only vanity because it does not satisfy ([Ecclesiastes 5:10](#)), but even if we could attain it, without Christ we would lose our souls and what profit is there in that ([Mark 8:36](#))? Ultimately, every disappointment and vanity described in Ecclesiastes has its remedy in Christ, the wisdom of God and the only true meaning to be found in life.

**Practical Application:** Ecclesiastes offers the Christian an opportunity to understand the emptiness and despair that those who do not know God grapple with. Those who do not have a saving faith in Christ are faced with a life that will ultimately end and become

irrelevant. If there is no salvation, and no God, then not only is there no point to life, but no purpose or direction to it, either. The world "under the sun," apart from God, is frustrating, cruel, unfair, brief, and "utterly meaningless." But with Christ, life is but a shadow of the glories to come in a heaven that is only accessible through Him.

# Summary of the Song of Solomon

**Author:** Solomon wrote Song of Solomon, according to the first verse. This song is one of 1,005 that Solomon wrote ([1 Kings 4:32](#)). The title "Song of Songs" is a superlative, meaning this is the best one.

**Date of Writing:** Solomon most likely wrote this song during the early part of his reign. This would place the date of composition around 965 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Song of Solomon is a lyric poem written to extol the virtues of love between a husband and his wife. The poem clearly presents marriage as God's design. A man and woman are to live together within the context of marriage, loving each other spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

This book combats two extremes: asceticism (the denial of all pleasure) and hedonism (the pursuit of only pleasure). The marriage profiled in Song of Solomon is a model of care, commitment, and delight.

## Key Verses:

[Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5; 8:4](#) - "Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires."

[Song of Solomon 5:1](#) - "Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers."

[Song of Solomon 8:6-7](#) - "Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. 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."

**Brief Summary:** The poetry takes the form of a dialogue between a husband (the king) and his wife (the Shulamite). We can divide the book into three sections: the courtship (1:1 - 3:5); the wedding (3:6 - 5:1); and the maturing marriage (5:2 - 8:14).

The song begins before the wedding, as the bride-to-be longs to be with her betrothed, and she looks forward to his intimate caresses. However, she advises letting love develop naturally, in its own time. The king praises the Shulamite's beauty, overcoming

her feelings of insecurity about her appearance. The Shulamite has a dream in which she loses Solomon and searches throughout the city for him. With the help of the city guards, she finds her beloved and clings to him, taking him to a safe place. Upon waking, she repeats her injunction not to force love.

On the wedding night, the husband again praises the beauty of his wife, and in highly symbolic language, the wife invites her spouse to partake of all she has to offer. They make love, and God blesses their union.

As the marriage matures, the husband and wife go through a difficult time, symbolized in another dream. In this second dream, the Shulamite rebuffs her husband, and he leaves. Overcome with guilt, she searches the city for him; but this time, instead of helping her, the guards beat her—symbolic of her pained conscience. Things end happily as the lovers reunite and are reconciled.

As the song ends, both the husband and wife are confident and secure in their love, they sing of the lasting nature of true love, and they yearn to be in each other's presence.

**Foreshadowings:** Some Bible interpreters see in Song of Solomon an exact symbolic representation of Christ and His church. Christ is seen as the king, while the church is represented by the Shulamite. While we believe the book should be understood literally as a depiction of marriage, there are some elements that foreshadow the Church and her relationship with her king, the Lord Jesus. [Song of Solomon 2:4](#) describes the experience of every believer who is sought and bought by the Lord Jesus. We are in a place of great spiritual wealth and are covered by His love. Verse 16 of chapter 2 says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies" (NKJV). Here is a picture of not only the security of the believer in Christ ([John 10:28-29](#)), but of the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep—believers—and lays down His life for us ([John 10:11](#)). Because of Him, we are no longer stained by sin, having had our "spots" removed by His blood ([Song of Solomon 4:7](#); [Ephesians 5:27](#)).

**Practical Application:** Our world is confused about marriage. The prevalence of divorce and modern attempts to redefine marriage stand in glaring contrast to Solomon's Song. Marriage, says the biblical poet, is to be celebrated, enjoyed, and revered. This book provides some practical guidelines for strengthening our marriages:

- 1) Give your spouse the attention he or she needs. Take the time to truly know your spouse.
- 2) Encouragement and praise, not criticism, are vital to a successful relationship.

3) Enjoy each other. Plan some getaways. Be creative, even playful, with each other. Delight in God's gift of married love.

4) Do whatever is necessary to reassure your commitment to your spouse. Renew your vows; work through problems and do not consider divorce as a solution. God intends for you both to live in a deeply peaceful, secure love.

# Summary of the Book of Isaiah

**Author:** [Isaiah 1:1](#) identifies the author of the book of Isaiah as the Prophet Isaiah. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Isaiah? Who was the author of Isaiah?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The book of Isaiah was written between 739 and 681 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Prophet Isaiah was primarily called to prophesy to the Kingdom of Judah. Judah was going through times of revival and times of rebellion. Judah was threatened with destruction by Assyria and Egypt, but was spared because of God's mercy. Isaiah proclaimed a message of repentance from sin and hopeful expectation of God's deliverance in the future.

## Key Verses:

[Isaiah 6:8](#), "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

[Isaiah 7:14](#), "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

[Isaiah 9:6](#), "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 14:12-13](#), "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.'"

[Isaiah 53:5-6](#), "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

[Isaiah 65:25](#), "The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my

holy mountain, says the LORD.”

**Brief Summary:** The book of Isaiah reveals God’s judgment and salvation. God is “holy, holy, holy” ([Isaiah 6:3](#)), and therefore He cannot allow sin to go unpunished ([Isaiah 1:2](#); [2:11-20](#); [5:30](#); [34:1-2](#); [42:25](#)). Isaiah portrays God’s oncoming judgment as a “consuming fire” ([Isaiah 1:31](#); [30:33](#)).

At the same time, Isaiah understands that God is a God of mercy, grace, and compassion ([Isaiah 5:25](#); [11:16](#); [14:1-2](#); [32:2](#); [40:3](#); [41:14-16](#)). The nation of Israel (both Judah and Israel) is blind and deaf to God’s commands ([Isaiah 6:9-10](#); [42:7](#)). Judah is compared to a vineyard that should be, and will be, trampled on ([Isaiah 5:1-7](#)). Only because of His mercy and His promises to Israel, will God not allow Israel or Judah to be completely destroyed. He will bring restoration, forgiveness, and healing ([43:2](#); [43:16-19](#); [52:10-12](#)).

More than any other book in the Old Testament, Isaiah focuses on the salvation that will come through the Messiah. The Messiah will one day rule in justice and righteousness ([Isaiah 9:7](#); [32:1](#)). The reign of the Messiah will bring peace and safety to Israel ([Isaiah 11:6-9](#)). Through the Messiah, Israel will be a light to all the nations ([Isaiah 42:6](#); [55:4-5](#)). The Messiah’s kingdom on earth (Isaiah chapters 65-66) is the goal toward which all of the book of Isaiah points. It is during the reign of the Messiah that God’s righteousness will be fully revealed to the world.

In a seeming paradox, the book of Isaiah also presents the Messiah as one who will suffer. Isaiah chapter 53 vividly describes the Messiah suffering for sin. It is through His wounds that healing is achieved. It is through His suffering that our iniquities are taken away. This apparent contradiction is solved in the Person of Jesus Christ. In His first advent, Jesus was the suffering servant of Isaiah chapter 53. In His second advent, Jesus will be the conquering and ruling King, the Prince of Peace ([Isaiah 9:6](#)).

**Foreshadowings:** As stated above, chapter 53 of Isaiah describes the coming Messiah and the suffering He would endure in order to pay for our sins. In His sovereignty, God orchestrated every detail of the crucifixion to fulfill every prophecy of this chapter, as well as all other messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The imagery of chapter 53 is poignant and prophetic and contains a complete picture of the Gospel. Jesus was despised and rejected (v. 3; [Luke 13:34](#); [John 1:10-11](#)), stricken by God (v.4; [Matthew 27:46](#)), and pierced for our transgressions (v. 5; [John 19:34](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#)). By His suffering, He paid the punishment we deserved and became for us the ultimate and perfect sacrifice (v. 5; [Hebrews 10:10](#)). Although He was sinless, God laid on Him our sin, and we became God’s righteousness in Him ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).



**Practical Application:** The book of Isaiah presents our Savior to us in undeniable detail. He is the only way to heaven, the only means of obtaining the grace of God, the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)). Knowing the price Christ paid for us, how can we neglect or reject “so great a salvation”? ([Hebrews 2:3](#)). We have only a few, short years on earth to come to Christ and embrace the salvation only He offers. There is no second chance after death, and eternity in hell is a very long time.

Do you know people who claim to be believers in Christ who are two-faced, who are hypocrites? That is perhaps the best summary of how Isaiah viewed the nation of Israel. Israel had an appearance of righteousness, but it was a facade. In the Book of Isaiah, the Prophet Isaiah challenges Israel to obey God with all of their heart, not just on the outside. Isaiah’s desire was that those who heard and read his words would be convicted to turn from wickedness and turn to God for forgiveness and healing.

# Summary of the Book of Jeremiah

**Author:** Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 1 identifies the Prophet Jeremiah as the author of the Book of Jeremiah. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Jeremiah? Who was the author of Jeremiah?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Jeremiah was written between 630 and 580 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Jeremiah records the final prophecies to Judah, warning of oncoming destruction if the nation does not repent. Jeremiah calls out for the nation to turn back to God. At the same time, Jeremiah recognizes the inevitability of Judah's destruction due to its unrepentant idolatry and immorality.

## Key Verses:

[Jeremiah 1:5](#), "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

[Jeremiah 17:9](#), "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

[Jeremiah 29:10-11](#), "This is what the LORD says: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. 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 52:12-13](#), "On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, [Nebuzaradan](#) commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Jeremiah is primarily a message of judgment on Judah for rampant idolatry ([Jeremiah 7:30-34](#); [16:10-13](#); [22:9](#); [32:29](#); [44:2-3](#)). After the death of King Josiah, the last righteous king, the nation of Judah had almost completely abandoned God and His commandments. Jeremiah compares Judah to a prostitute

([Jeremiah 2:20; 3:1-3](#)). God had promised that He would judge idolatry most severely ([Leviticus 26:31-33; Deuteronomy 28:49-68](#)), and Jeremiah was warning Judah that God's judgment was at hand. God had delivered Judah from destruction on countless occasions, but His mercy was at its end. Jeremiah records King Nebuchadnezzar conquering Judah and making it subject to him ([Jeremiah 24:1](#)). After further rebellion, God brought Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies back to destroy and desolate Judah and Jerusalem (Jeremiah chapter 52). Even in this most severe judgment, God promises the restoration of Judah back into the land God has given them ([Jeremiah 29:10](#)).

**Foreshadowings:** [Jeremiah 23:5-6](#) presents a prophecy of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. The prophet describes Him as a Branch from the house of David (v. 5; [Matthew 1](#)), the King who would reign in wisdom and righteousness (v. 5, [Revelation 11:15](#)). It is Christ who will finally be recognized by Israel as her true Messiah as He provides salvation for His chosen ones (v. 6; [Romans 11:26](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Prophet Jeremiah had a most difficult message to deliver. Jeremiah loved Judah, but he loved God much more. As painful as it was for Jeremiah to deliver a consistent message of judgment to his own people, Jeremiah was obedient to what God told him to do and say. Jeremiah hoped and prayed for mercy from God for Judah, but also trusted that God was good, just, and righteous. We too must obey God, even when it is difficult, recognize God's will as more important than our own desires, and trust that God, in His infinite wisdom and perfect plan, will bring about the best for His children ([Romans 8:28](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Lamentations

**Author:** The Book of Lamentations does not explicitly identify its author. The tradition is that the Prophet Jeremiah wrote Lamentations. This view is highly likely considering the author was a witness of the Babylonians destroying Jerusalem. Jeremiah fits this qualification ([2 Chronicles 35:25; 36:21-22](#)). [Who wrote the book of Lamentations? Who was the author of Lamentations?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Lamentations was likely written between 586 and 575 B.C., during or soon after Jerusalem's fall.

**Purpose of Writing:** As a result of Judah's continued and unrepentant idolatry, God allowed the Babylonians to besiege, plunder, burn, and destroy the city of Jerusalem. Solomon's Temple, which had stood for approximately 400 years, was burned to the ground. The Prophet Jeremiah, an eyewitness to these events, wrote the Book of Lamentations as a lament for what occurred to Judah and Jerusalem.

## Key Verses:

[Lamentations 2:17](#), "The LORD has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his word, which he decreed long ago. He has overthrown you without pity, he has let the enemy gloat over you, he has exalted the horn of your foes."

[Lamentations 3:22-23](#), "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 5:19-22](#), "You, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long? Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Lamentations is divided into five chapters. Each chapter represents a separate poem. In the original Hebrew, the verses are acrostic, each verse starting with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Book of Lamentations, the Prophet Jeremiah understands that the Babylonians were God's tool for bringing judgment on Jerusalem ([Lamentations 1:12-15; 2:1-8; 4:11](#)). Lamentations makes it clear

that sin and rebellion were the causes of God's wrath being poured out (1:8-9; 4:13; 5:16). Lamenting is appropriate in a time of distress, but it should quickly give way to contrition and repentance ([Lamentations 3:40-42](#); [5:21-22](#)).

**Foreshadowings:** Jeremiah was known as the "[weeping prophet](#)" for his deep and abiding passion for his people and their city ([Lamentations 3:48-49](#)). This same sorrow over the sins of the people and their rejection of God was expressed by Jesus as He approached Jerusalem and looked ahead to her destruction at the hands of the Romans ([Luke 19:41-44](#)). Because of the Jews' rejection of their Messiah, God used the Roman siege to punish His people. But God takes no joy in having to punish His children and His offer of Jesus Christ as a provision for sin shows His great compassion on His people. One day, because of Christ, God will wipe away all tears ([Revelation 7:17](#)).

**Practical Application:** Even in terrible judgment, God is a God of hope ([Lamentations 3:24-25](#)). No matter how far we have gone from Him, we have the hope that we can return to Him and find Him compassionate and forgiving ([1 John 1:9](#)). Our God is a loving God ([Lamentations 3:22](#)), and because of His great love and compassion, He sent His Son so that we would not perish in our sins, but can live eternally with Him ([John 3:16](#)). God's faithfulness ([Lamentations 3:23](#)) and deliverance ([Lamentations 3:26](#)) are attributes that give us great hope and comfort. He is not a disinterested, capricious god, but a God who will deliver all those who turn to Him, admit they can do nothing to earn His favor, and call upon the Lord's mercy so that we will not be consumed ([Lamentations 3:22](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Ezekiel

**Author:** The Prophet Ezekiel is the author of the book ([Ezekiel 1:3](#)). He was a contemporary of both Jeremiah and Daniel. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Ezekiel? Who was the author of Ezekiel?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Ezekiel was likely written between 593 and 565 B.C. during the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

**Purpose of Writing:** Ezekiel ministered to his generation who were both exceedingly sinful and thoroughly hopeless. By means of his prophetic ministry he attempted to bring them to immediate repentance and to confidence in the distant future. He taught that: (1) God works through human messengers; (2) Even in defeat and despair God's people need to affirm God's sovereignty; (3) God's Word never fails; (4) God is present and can be worshiped anywhere; (5) People must obey God if they expect to receive blessings; and (6) God's Kingdom will come.

## Key Verses:

[Ezekiel 2:3-6](#), "He said: 'son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says." And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.'"

[Ezekiel 18:4](#), "For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die."

[Ezekiel 28:12-14](#), "'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones."

[Ezekiel 33:11](#), "Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.'

Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?"

[Ezekiel 48:35](#), "And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE."

**Brief Summary:** How can you cope with a world gone astray? Ezekiel, destined to begin his life's ministry as a priest at age thirty, was uprooted from his homeland and marched off to Babylon at the age of twenty-five. For five years he languished in despair. At age thirty a majestic vision of Yahweh's glory captivated his being in Babylon. The priest/prophet discovered God was not confined to the narrow strictures of Ezekiel's native land. Instead, He is a universal God who commands and controls persons and nations. In Babylon, God imparted to Ezekiel His Word for the people. His call experience transformed Ezekiel. He became avidly devoted to God's Word. He realized he had nothing personally to assist the captives in their bitter situation, but he was convinced God's Word spoke to their condition and could give them victory in it. Ezekiel used various methods to convey God's Word to his people. He used art in drawing a depiction of Jerusalem, symbolic actions and unusual conduct to secure attention. He cut his hair and beard to demonstrate what God would do to Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

Ezekiel's book can be divided into four sections:

Chapters 1-24: prophecies on the ruin of Jerusalem

Chapters 25-32: prophecies of God's judgment on nearby nations

Chapter 33: a last call for repentance to Israel

Chapters 34-48: prophecies concerning the future restoration of Israel

**Foreshadowings:** [Ezekiel 34](#) is the chapter wherein God denounces the leaders of Israel as false shepherds for their poor care of His people. Instead of caring for the sheep of Israel, they cared for themselves. They ate well, were well-clothed and well-cared for by the very people they had been placed over ([Ezekiel 34:1-3](#)). By contrast, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep and who protects them from the wolves who would destroy the flock ([John 10:11-12](#)). Verse 4 of chapter 34 describes people whom the shepherds failed to minister to as weak, sick, injured and lost. Jesus is the Great Physician who heals our spiritual wounds ([Isaiah 53:5](#)) by His death on the cross. He is the one who seeks and saves that which is lost ([Luke 19:10](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of Ezekiel calls us to join in a fresh and living encounter with the God of Abraham, Moses and the prophets. We must be overcomers or we will be overcome. Ezekiel challenged us to experience a life changing vision of God's power, knowledge, eternal presence and holiness; to let God direct us; to comprehend the depth of and commitment to evil that lodges in each human heart; to recognize that

God holds His servants responsible for warning wicked men of their peril; to experience a living relationship with Jesus Christ, who said that the new covenant is to be found in His blood.



# Summary of the Book of Daniel

**Author:** The Book of Daniel identifies the Prophet Daniel as its author ([Daniel 9:2](#); [10:2](#)). Jesus mentions Daniel as the author as well ([Matthew 24:15](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Daniel? Who was the author of Daniel?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Daniel was likely written between 540 and 530 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon had conquered Judah and deported many of its inhabitants to Babylon – Daniel included. Daniel served in the royal court of Nebuchadnezzar and several rulers who followed Nebuchadnezzar. The Book of Daniel records the actions, prophecies, and visions of the Prophet Daniel.

## Key Verses:

[Daniel 1:19-20](#), "The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom."

[Daniel 2:31](#), "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue - an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance."

[Daniel 3:17-18](#), "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

[Daniel 4:34-35](#), "His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'"

[Daniel 9:25-27](#), "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary."

The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

**Brief Summary:** Chapter 1 describes the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Along with many others, Daniel and his three friends were deported to Babylon, and because of their courage and the obvious blessings of God upon them, they were "promoted" in the king's service ([Daniel 1:17-20](#)).

Chapters 2-4 record Nebuchadnezzar having a dream that only Daniel could correctly interpret. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great statue represented the kingdoms that would arise in the future. Nebuchadnezzar made a great statue of himself and forced everyone to worship it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused and were miraculously spared by God despite being thrown into a fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar is judged by God for his pride, but later restored once he recognized and admitted God's sovereignty.

Daniel chapter 5 records Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar misusing the items taken from the Temple in Jerusalem and receiving a message from God, written into the wall, in response. Only Daniel could interpret the writing, a message of coming judgment from God. In chapter 6, Daniel is thrown into the lions' den for refusing to pray to the emperor, but was miraculously spared. In chapter 7, God gave Daniel a vision of four beasts. The four beasts represented the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Chapters 8-12 contain a vision involving a ram, a goat, and several horns – also referring to future kingdoms and their rulers. Daniel chapter 9 records Daniel's "seventy weeks" prophecy. God gave Daniel the precise timeline of when the Messiah would come and be cut off. The prophecy also mentions a future ruler who will make a seven-year covenant with Israel and break it after three and a half years, followed shortly thereafter by the great judgment and consummation of all things. Daniel is visited and strengthened by an angel after this great vision, and the angel explains the vision to Daniel in great detail.

**Foreshadowings:** We see in the stories of the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions' den a foreshadowing of the salvation provided by Christ. The three men declare that God is a saving God who can provide a way of escape from the fire ([Daniel 3:17](#)). In the same way, by sending Jesus to die for our sins, God has provided an escape from the fires of

hell ([1 Peter 3:18](#)). In Daniel's case, God provided an angel to shut the lions' mouths and saved Daniel from death. Jesus Christ is our provision from the dangers of the sins that threaten to consume us.

Daniel's vision of the end times depicts Israel's Messiah by whom many will be made pure and holy ([Daniel 12:10](#)). He is our righteousness ([1 Corinthians 1:30](#)) by whom our sins, though blood-red, will be washed away, and we will be as white as snow ([Isaiah 1:18](#)).

**Practical Application:** Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we should always stand for what we know is right. God is greater than any punishment that could come upon us. Whether God chooses to deliver us or not, He is always worthy of our trust. God knows what is best, and He honors those who trust and obey Him.

God has a plan, and His plan is down to the intricate detail. God knows and is in control of the future. Everything that God has predicted has come true exactly as He predicted. Therefore, we should believe and trust that the things He has predicted for the future will one day occur exactly as God has declared.

# Summary of the Book of Hosea

**Author:** [Hosea 1:1](#) identifies the author of the book as the Prophet Hosea. It is Hosea's personal account of his prophetic messages to the children of God and to the world. Hosea is the only prophet of Israel who left any written prophecies which were recorded during the later years of his life. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Hosea? Who was the author of Hosea?](#)

**Date of Writing:** Hosea, the son of Beerli, prophesied for quite some time, from 785 to 725 B.C. The Book of Hosea was likely written between 755 and 725 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Hosea wrote this book to remind the Israelites—and us—that ours is a loving God whose loyalty to His covenant people is unwavering. In spite of Israel's continual turning to false gods, God's steadfast love is portrayed in the long-suffering husband of the unfaithful wife. Hosea's message is also one of warning to those who would turn their backs on God's love. Through the symbolic presentation of the marriage of Hosea and Gomer, God's love for the idolatrous nation of Israel is displayed in a rich metaphor in the themes of sin, judgment, and forgiving love.

## Key Verses:

[Hosea 1:2](#), "When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, 'Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD.'"

[Hosea 2:23](#), "I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

[Hosea 6:6](#), "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

[Hosea 14:2-4](#), "Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: 'Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount war-horses. We will never again say "Our gods" to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion.' I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Hosea can be divided into two parts: (1) [Hosea 1:1-3:5](#) is a description of an adulterous wife and a faithful husband, symbolic of the unfaithfulness of Israel to God through idolatry, and (2) [Hosea 4:1-14:9](#) contains the condemnation of Israel, especially Samaria, for the worship of idols and her eventual restoration.

The first section of the book contains three distinctive poems illustrating how God's children returned time after time to idolatry. God commands Hosea to marry Gomer, but after bearing him three children, she walks away from Hosea to her lovers. The symbolic emphasis can be seen clearly in the first chapter as Hosea compares Israel's actions to turning from a marriage to life as a prostitute. The second section contains Hosea's denunciation of the Israelites but followed by the promises and the mercies of God.

The Book of Hosea is a prophetic accounting of God's relentless love for His children. Since the beginning of time God's ungrateful and undeserving creation has been accepting God's love, grace, and mercy while still unable to refrain from its wickedness.

The last part of Hosea shows how God's love once again restores His children as He forgets their misdeeds when they turn back to Him with a repentant heart. The prophetic message of Hosea foretells the coming of Israel's Messiah 700 years in the future. Hosea is quoted often in the New Testament.

**Foreshadowings:** [Hosea 2:23](#) is the wonderful prophetic message from God to include the Gentiles [non-Jews] as His children as recorded also in [Romans 9:25](#) and [1 Peter 2:10](#). Gentiles are not originally "God's people," but through His mercy and grace, He has provided Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him we are grafted into the tree of His people ([Romans 11:11-18](#)). This is an amazing truth about the Church, one that is called a "mystery" because before Christ, God's people were considered to be the Jews alone. When Christ came, the Jews were temporarily blinded until the "full number of the Gentiles has come in" ([Romans 11:25](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of Hosea assures us of God's unconditional love for His people. But it is also a picture of how God is dishonored and angered by the actions of His children. How can a child who is given an abundance of love, mercy, and grace treat a Father with so much disrespect? Yet, we have done just that for centuries. As we consider how the Israelites turned their backs on God, we need to look no further than the mirror in front of us to see a reflection of those same Israelites.

Only by remembering how much God has done for each of us will we be able to avoid rejecting the One who can give us eternal life in glory instead of the hell we deserve. It is essential that we learn to respect our Creator. Hosea has shown us God's heart of loving

commitment. When we do sin, if we have a sorrowful heart filled with repentance, then God will bring us back to Himself and show His never-ending love to us (see [1 John 1:9](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Joel

**Author:** The Book of Joel states that its author was the Prophet Joel ([Joel 1:1](#)).

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Joel was likely written between 835 and 800 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Judah, the setting for the book, is devastated by a vast horde of locusts. This invasion of locusts destroys everything—the fields of grain, the vineyards, the gardens and the trees. Joel symbolically describes the locusts as a marching human army and views all of this as divine judgment coming against the nation for her sins. The book is highlighted by two major events. One is the invasion of locusts and the other the outpouring of the Spirit. The initial fulfillment of this is quoted by Peter in [Acts 2](#) as having taken place at Pentecost.

## Key Verses:

[Joel 1:4](#), "What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten."

[Joel 2:25](#), "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten..."

[Joel 2:28](#), "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."

**Brief Summary:** A terrible plague of locusts is followed by a severe famine throughout the land. Joel uses these happenings as the catalyst to send words of warning to Judah. Unless the people repent quickly and completely, enemy armies will devour the land as did the natural elements. Joel appeals to all the people and the priests of the land to fast and humble themselves as they seek God's forgiveness. If they will respond, there will be renewed material and spiritual blessings for the nation. But the Day of the Lord is coming. At this time the dreaded locusts will seem as gnats in comparison, as all nations receive His judgment.

The overriding theme of the Book of Joel is the Day of the Lord, a day of God's wrath and judgment. This is the Day in which God reveals His attributes of wrath, power, and holiness, and it is a terrifying day to His enemies. In the first chapter, the Day of the Lord

is experienced historically by the plague of locusts upon the land. Chapter 2:1-17 is a transitional chapter in which Joel uses the metaphor of the locust plague and drought to renew a call to repentance. Chapters 2:18-3:21 describes the Day of the Lord in eschatological terms and answers the call to repentance with prophecies of physical restoration (2:21-27), spiritual restoration (2:28-32), and national restoration (3:1-21).

**Foreshadowings:** Whenever the Old Testament speaks of judgment for sin, whether individual or national sin, the advent of Jesus Christ is foreshadowed. The prophets of the Old Testament continually warned Israel to repent, but even when they did, their repentance was limited to law-keeping and works. Their temple sacrifices were but a shadow of the ultimate sacrifice, offered once for all time, which would come at the cross ([Hebrews 10:10](#)). Joel tells us that God's ultimate judgment, which falls on the Day of the Lord, will be "great and terrible. Who can endure it?" ([Joel 2:11](#)). The answer is that we, on our own, can never endure such a moment. But if we have placed our faith in Christ for atonement of our sins, we have nothing to fear from the Day of Judgment.

**Practical Application:** Without repentance, judgment will be harsh, thorough, and certain. Our trust should not be in our possessions but in the Lord our God. God at times may use nature, sorrow, or other common occurrences to draw us closer to Him. But in His mercy and grace, He has provided the definitive plan for our salvation—Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins and exchanging our sin for His perfect righteousness ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). There is no time to lose. God's judgment will come swiftly, as a thief in the night ([1 Thessalonians 5:2](#)), and we must be ready. Today is the day of salvation ([2 Corinthians 6:2](#)). "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon" ([Isaiah 55:6-7](#)). Only by appropriating God's salvation can we escape His wrath on the Day of the Lord.



# Summary of the Book of Amos

**Author:** [Amos 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Amos as the [Prophet Amos](#). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Amos? Who was the author of Amos?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Amos was likely written between 760 and 753 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Amos is a shepherd and a fruit picker from the Judean village of [Tekoa](#) when God calls him, even though he lacks an education or a priestly background. Amos' mission is directed to his neighbor to the north, Israel. His messages of impending doom and captivity for the nation because of her sins are largely unpopular and unheeded, however, because not since the days of Solomon have times been so good in Israel. Amos' ministry takes place while Jeroboam II reigns over Israel, and Uzziah reigns over Judah.

## Key Verses:

[Amos 2:4](#), "This is what the LORD says: 'For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not turn back [my wrath]. Because they have rejected the law of the LORD and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed.'"

[Amos 3:7](#), "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets."

[Amos 9:14](#), "I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit."

**Brief Summary:** Amos can see that beneath Israel's external prosperity and power, internally the nation is corrupt to the core. The sins for which Amos chastens the people are extensive: neglect of God's Word, idolatry, pagan worship, greed, corrupted leadership, and oppression of the poor. Amos begins by pronouncing a judgment upon all the surrounding nations, then upon his own nation of Judah, and finally the harshest judgment is given to Israel. His visions from God reveal the same emphatic message: judgment is near. The book ends with God's promise to Amos of future restoration of the remnant.

**Foreshadowings:** The Book of Amos ends with a glorious promise for the future. "I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God" (9:15). The ultimate fulfillment of God's land promise to Abraham ([Gen. 12:7](#); [15:7](#); [17:8](#)) will occur during Christ's millennial reign on earth (see [Joel 2:26,27](#)). [Revelation 20](#) describes the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, a time of peace and joy under the perfect government of the Savior Himself. At that time, believing Israel and the Gentile Christians will be combined in the Church and will live and reign with Christ.

**Practical Application:** Sometimes we think we are a "just-a"! We are just-a salesman, farmer, or housewife. Amos would be considered a "just-a." He wasn't a prophet or priest or the son of either. He was just a shepherd, a small businessman in Judah. Who would listen to him? But instead of making excuses, Amos obeyed and became God's powerful voice for change.

God has used ordinary people such as shepherds, carpenters, and fishermen all through the Bible. Whatever you are in this life, God can use you. Amos wasn't much. He was a "just-a." "Just-a" servant for God. It is good to be God's "just-a."

# Summary of the Book of Obadiah

**Author:** Obadiah verse 1 identifies the author of the Book of Obadiah as the Prophet Obadiah.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Obadiah was likely written either between 848 and 840 BC, following an invasion of the Philistines and Arabians, or between 607 and 585 BC, following one of the invasions of the Babylonians.

**Purpose of Writing:** Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament, is only 21 verses long. Obadiah is a prophet of God who uses this opportunity to condemn Edom for sins against both God and Israel. The Edomites are descendants of Esau and the Israelites are descendants of his twin brother, Jacob. A quarrel between the brothers has affected their descendants for over 1,000 years. This division caused the Edomites to forbid Israel to cross their land during the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt. Edom's sins of pride now require a strong word of judgment from the Lord.

## Key Verses:

Obadiah verse 4, "'Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,' declares the LORD."

Obadiah verse 12, "You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble."

Obadiah verse 15, "The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head."

**Brief Summary:** Obadiah's message is final and it is sure: the kingdom of Edom will be destroyed completely. Edom has been arrogant, gloating over Israel's misfortunes, and when enemy armies attack Israel and the Israelites ask for help, the Edomites refuse and choose to fight against them, not for them. These sins of pride can be overlooked no longer. The book ends with the promise of the fulfillment and deliverance of Zion in the Last Days when the land will be restored to God's people as He rules over them.

**Foreshadowings:** Verse 21 of the Book of Obadiah contains a foreshadowing of Christ and His Church. "Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, And the kingdom shall be the LORD's" (NKJV). These "saviors" (also called "deliverers" in several versions) are the apostles of Christ, ministers of the word, and especially the preachers of the Gospel in these latter days. They are called "saviors," not because they obtain our salvation, but because they preach salvation through the Gospel of Christ and show us the way to obtain that salvation. They, and the Word preached by them, are the means by which the good news of salvation is delivered to all men. While Christ is the only Savior who alone came to purchase salvation, and is the author of it, saviors and deliverers of the Gospel will be more and more in evidence as the end of the age draws near.

**Practical Application:** God will overcome in our behalf if we will stay true to Him. Unlike Edom, we must be willing to help others in times of need. Pride is sin. We have nothing to be proud of except Jesus Christ and what He has done for us.

# Summary of the Book of Jonah

**Author:** [Jonah 1:1](#) identifies the book as telling the story of the prophet Jonah. Although the book is written in the third person, the traditional view is that Jonah is the author of the book, and there is no persuasive reason to theorize about an unknown author. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Jonah? Who was the author of Jonah?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Jonah was likely written between 793 and 758 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Disobedience and revival are the key themes in this book. Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale provides him with a unique opportunity to seek a unique deliverance, as he repents during this equally unique retreat. His initial disobedience leads not only to his personal revival, but to that of the Ninevites as well. Many classify the revival which Jonah brings to Nineveh as one of the greatest evangelistic efforts of all time.

## Key Verses:

[Jonah 1:3](#), "But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish..."

[Jonah 1:17](#), "But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights."

[Jonah 2:2](#), "In my distress I called to the LORD, and He answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry."

[Jonah 3:10](#), "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened."

**Brief Summary:** Jonah's fear and pride cause him to run from God. He does not wish to go to Nineveh to preach repentance to the people, as God has commanded, because he feels they are his enemies, and he is convinced that God will not carry out his threat to destroy the city. Instead he boards a ship for Tarshish, which is in the opposite direction. Soon a raging storm causes the crew to cast lots and determine that Jonah is the problem. They throw him overboard, and he is swallowed by a great fish. In its belly for 3 days and 3 nights, Jonah repents of his sin to God, and the fish vomits him up on dry land (we wonder what took him so long to repent). Jonah then makes the 500-mile trip to Nineveh and leads the city in a great revival. But the prophet is displeased (actually

pouts) instead of being thankful when Nineveh repents. Jonah learns his lesson, however, when God uses a wind, a gourd, and a worm to teach him that He is merciful.

**Foreshadowings:** That Jonah is a type of Christ is clear from Jesus' own words. In [Matthew 12:40-41](#), Jesus declares that He will be in the grave the same amount of time Jonah was in the whale's belly. He goes on to say that while the Ninevites repented in the face of Jonah's preaching, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law who rejected Jesus were rejecting One who is far greater than Jonah. Just as Jonah brought the truth of God regarding repentance and salvation to the Ninevites, so too does Jesus bring the same message ([Jonah 2:9](#); [John 14:6](#)) of salvation of and through God alone ([Romans 11:36](#)).

**Practical Application:** We cannot hide from God. What He wishes to accomplish through us will come to pass, despite all our objections and foot-dragging. [Ephesians 2:10](#) reminds us that He has plans for us and will see to it that we conform to those plans. How much easier it would be if we, unlike Jonah, would submit to Him without delay!

God's love manifests itself in His accessibility to all, regardless of our reputation, nationality or race. The free offer of the Gospel is for all people in all times. Our task as Christians is to be the means by which God tells the world of the offer and to rejoice in the salvation of others. This is an experience God wants us to share with Him, not being jealous or resentful of those who come to Christ in "last-minute conversions" or who come through circumstances dissimilar to our own.

# Summary of the Book of Micah

**Author:** The author of the Book of Micah was the Prophet Micah ([Micah 1:1](#)).

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Micah was likely written between 735 and 700 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The message of the Book of Micah is a complex mixture of judgment and hope. On the one hand, the prophecies announce judgment upon Israel for social evils, corrupt leadership and idolatry. This judgment was expected to culminate in the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem. On the other hand, the book proclaims not merely the restoration of the nation, but the transformation and exaltation of Israel and Jerusalem. The messages of hope and doom are not necessarily contradictory, however, since restoration and transformation take place only after judgment.

## Key Verses:

[Micah 1:2](#), "Hear, O peoples, all of you, listen, O earth and all who are in it, that the Sovereign LORD may witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple."

[Micah 5:2](#), "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

[Micah 6:8](#), "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 7:18-19](#), "Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

**Brief Summary:** The prophet condemns the rulers, priests, and prophets of Israel who exploit and mislead the people. It is because of their deeds that Jerusalem will be destroyed. The prophet Micah proclaims the deliverance of the people who will go from Jerusalem to Babylon and concludes with an exhortation for Jerusalem to destroy the nations who have gathered against her. The ideal ruler would come from Bethlehem to defend the nation, and the prophet proclaims the triumph of the remnant of Jacob and

foresees a day when Yahweh will purge the nation of idolatry and reliance on military might. The prophet sets forth a powerful and concise summary of Yahweh's requirement for justice and loyalty and announces judgment upon those who have followed the ways of [Omri](#) and [Ahab](#). The book closes with a prophetic liturgy comprising elements of a lament. Israel confesses its sin and is assured of deliverance through Yahweh's mighty acts.

**Foreshadowings:** [Micah 5:2](#) is a Messianic prophecy quoted when the magi were searching for the king born in Bethlehem ([Matthew 2:6](#)). These wise men from the East were told that from the tiny village of Bethlehem would come forth the Prince of Peace, the Light of the world. Micah's message of sin, repentance, and restoration finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ who is the propitiation for our sins ([Romans 3:24-25](#)) and the only way to God ([John 14:6](#)).

**Practical Application:** God gives warnings so we will not have to suffer His wrath. Judgment is certain if God's warnings are not heeded and His provision for sin in the sacrifice of His Son is rejected. For the believer in Christ, God will discipline us—not from hate—but because He loves us. He knows that sin destroys and He wants us to be whole. This wholeness which is the promise of restoration awaits those who remain obedient to Him.



# Summary of the Book of Nahum

**Author:** The author of the Book of Nahum identifies himself as Nahum (in the Hebrew “Consoler” or “Comforter”) the Elkoshite (1:1). There are many theories as to where that city was though there is no conclusive evidence. One such theory is that it refers to the city later called Capernaum (which literally means “the village of Nahum”) at the Sea of Galilee.

**Date of Writing:** Given the limited amount of information that we know about Nahum, the best we can do is narrow the timeframe in which the Book of Nahum was written to between 663 and 612 B.C. Two events are mentioned that help us to determine these dates. First, Nahum mentions Thebes (No Amon) in Egypt falling to the Assyrians (663 B.C.) in the past tense, so it had already happened. Second, the remainder of Nahum’s prophecies came true in 612 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Nahum did not write this book as a warning or “call to repentance” for the people of Nineveh. God had already sent them the prophet Jonah 150 years earlier with His promise of what would happen if they continued in their evil ways. The people at that time had repented but now lived just as bad if not worse than they did before. The Assyrians had become absolutely brutal in their conquests (hanging the bodies of their victims on poles and putting their skin on the walls of their tents among other atrocities). Now Nahum was telling the people of Judah to not despair because God had pronounced judgment and the Assyrians would soon be getting just what they deserved.

## Key Verses:

[Nahum 1:7](#), “The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.”

[Nahum 1:14a](#), “The LORD has given a command concerning you, Nineveh: ‘You will have no descendants to bear your name.’”

[Nahum 1:15a](#), “Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace!” See also [Isaiah 52:7](#) and [Romans 10:15](#).

[Nahum 2:13a](#), “Behold I am against you,” says the LORD of hosts.”

[Nahum 3:19](#), "Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal. Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?"

**Brief Summary:** Nineveh once had responded to the preaching of Jonah and turned from their evil ways to serve the Lord God. But 150 years later, Nineveh returned to idolatry, violence, and arrogance ([Nahum 3:1-4](#)). Once again God sends one of His prophets to Nineveh warning of judgment in the form of the destruction of their city and exhorting them to repentance. Sadly, the Ninevites did not heed's Nahum's warning, and the city was brought under the dominion of Babylon.

**Foreshadowings:** Paul uses shades of the imagery of [Nahum 1:15](#) in [Romans 10:15](#) in regard to the ministry of the Messiah and the apostles. It may also be understood of any minister of the Gospel whose business it is to "preach the Gospel of peace." God has made peace with sinners by the blood of Christ, and has given to His people the peace that "transcends all understanding" ([Philippians 4:7](#)). The preacher's work is also to "bring glad tidings of good things" (KJV), such as reconciliation, righteousness, pardon, life, and eternal salvation by a crucified Christ. The preaching of such a Gospel, and bringing such news, make their feet beautiful. The imagery here is of one who runs to others, eager and joyful to proclaim the Good News.

**Practical Application:** God is patient and slow to anger. He gives every country time to repent of sin and follow Him as Lord. But He is not mocked. Any time a country turns away from Him and rejects righteousness, evil results, and He steps in with judgment. This was true for Assyria, and it will be true for any nation today. As Christians it is our duty to stand up for biblical principles and proclaim Christ, for it is only in repentance and the life-changing message of the gospel that any country can find hope.

# Summary of the Book of Habakkuk

**Author:** [Habakkuk 1:1](#) identifies the Book of Habakkuk as an oracle from the prophet Habakkuk. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Habakkuk? Who was the author of Habakkuk?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Habakkuk was likely written between 610 and 605 BC.

**Purpose of Writing:** The prophet Habakkuk decries the sins of Judah but grapples with the fact that God's chosen people will suffer at the hands of enemies even more wicked than they. God answers Habakkuk's questions, resulting in continuing faith in God's wisdom, sovereignty, and salvation.

## Key Verses:

[Habakkuk 1:2](#), "How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save?"

[Habakkuk 1:5](#), "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told."

[Habakkuk 1:12](#), "Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die" (ESV).

[Habakkuk 2:2–4](#), "Then the LORD answered me and said: 'Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith'" (NKJV).

[Habakkuk 2:20](#), "The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

[Habakkuk 3:2](#), "LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy."

[Habakkuk 3:19](#), "The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a

deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.”

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Habakkuk begins with Habakkuk crying out to God for an answer to why God’s chosen people are allowed to suffer in their captivity ([Habakkuk 1:1–4](#)). The Lord gives His answer to Habakkuk, essentially stating, “You wouldn’t believe it if I told you” ([Habakkuk 1:5–11](#)). Habakkuk then follows up by saying, “OK, you are God, but, still, tell me more about why this is happening” ([Habakkuk 1:17—2:1](#)). God then answers him again and gives him more information, then tells the earth to be silent before Him ([Habakkuk 2:2–20](#)). Then Habakkuk writes a prayer expressing his strong faith in God even through these trials ([Habakkuk 3:1–19](#)).

**Foreshadowings:** The apostle Paul quotes [Habakkuk 2:4](#) on two occasions ([Romans 1:17](#); [Galatians 3:11](#)) to reiterate the doctrine of justification by faith. The faith that is the gift of God and available through Christ is at once a faith that saves ([Ephesians 2:8–9](#)) and a faith that sustains throughout life. We attain eternal life by faith, and we live the Christian life by the same faith. In contrast to the “proud,” whose soul is not right within him ([Habakkuk 2:4, NASB](#)) and whose desires are not upright (NIV), is the one made righteous by faith in Christ. That person’s sin was exchanged for Christ’s perfection ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Now his soul *is* right within him, and his desires *are* upright, as Christ has enabled him to live by faith. The redeemed person is not proud but is humble (see [Matthew 5:5](#)). He follows the Lord Jesus, who is “gentle and humble in heart” ([Matthew 11:29](#)).

**Practical Application:** The application to the reader of Habakkuk is that it is permissible to question what God is doing, although with respect and reverence. Sometimes it is not evident to us what is going on, especially if we are thrown into suffering for a time or if it seems our enemies are prospering while we are just barely getting by. The Book of Habakkuk affirms that God is sovereign and omnipotent, and He has all things under control. We just need to be still and know He is at work. He is who He says He is and does keep His promises. He will punish the wicked. Even when we cannot see evidence of His dominion, God is still on the throne of the universe. We need to stay focused on this: “The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights” ([Habakkuk 3:19](#)). To “tread on the heights” is a picture of our ability, in the power of God, to rise above the troubles and hindrances of this world and experience victory over our enemies. Sometimes the way before us is full of suffering and sorrow, but, if we trust the Lord, we will come safely to where He wants us to be.

# Summary of the Book of Zephaniah

**Author:** [Zephaniah 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Zephaniah as the Prophet Zephaniah. The name Zephaniah means "defended by God."

**Date of Writing:** The book of Zephaniah was written during the reign of King Josiah, likely in the early part of his reign, between 635 and 625 BC.

**Purpose of Writing:** Zephaniah's message of judgment and encouragement contains three major doctrines: 1) God is sovereign over all nations. 2) The wicked will be punished and the righteous will be vindicated on the day of judgment. 3) God blesses those who repent and trust in Him.

## Key Verses:

[Zephaniah 1:18](#), "Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth."

[Zephaniah 2:3](#), "Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger."

[Zephaniah 3:17](#), "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

**Brief Summary:** Zephaniah pronounces the Lord's judgment on the whole earth, on Judah, on the surrounding nations, on Jerusalem, and on all nations. This is followed by proclamations of the Lord's blessing on all nations and especially on the faithful remnant of His people in Judah.

Zephaniah had the courage to speak bluntly because he knew he was proclaiming the Word of the Lord. His book begins with "The word of the Lord" and ends with "says the Lord." He knew that neither the many gods the people worshiped nor even the might of the Assyrian army could save them. God is gracious and compassionate, but when all His warnings are ignored, judgment is to be expected. God's day of judgment is frequently

mentioned in the Scriptures. The prophets called it the "Day of the Lord." They referred to various events such as the fall of Jerusalem as manifestations of God's Day, each of which pointed toward the ultimate Day of the Lord.

**Foreshadowings:** The final blessings on Zion pronounced in 3:14-20 are largely unfulfilled, leading us to conclude that these are messianic prophecies that await the [Second Coming](#) of Christ to be completed. The Lord has taken away our punishment only through Christ who came to die for the sins of His people ([Zephaniah 3:15](#); [John 3:16](#)). But Israel has not yet recognized her true Savior. This is yet to happen ([Romans 11:25-27](#)).

The promise of peace and safety for Israel, a time when their King is in their midst, will be fulfilled when Christ returns to judge the world and redeem it for Himself. Just as He ascended to heaven after His resurrection, so will He return and set up a new Jerusalem on earth ([Revelation 21](#)). At that time, all God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled.

**Practical Application:** With a few adjustments in names and situations, this prophet of 7th century B.C. could stand in our pulpits today and deliver the same message of judgment of the wicked and hope for the faithful. Zephaniah reminds us that God is offended by the moral and religious sins of His people. God's people will not escape punishment when they sin willfully. Punishment may be painful, but its purpose may be redemptive rather than punitive. The inevitability of the punishment of wickedness gives comfort in a time when it seems that evil is unbridled and victorious. We have the freedom to disobey God but not the freedom to escape the consequences of that disobedience. Those who are faithful to God may be relatively few, but He does not forget them.

# Summary of the Book of Haggai

**Author:** [Haggai 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Haggai as the Prophet Haggai.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Haggai was written in approximately 520 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Haggai sought to challenge the people of God concerning their priorities. He called them to reverence and glorify God by building the Temple in spite of local and official opposition. Haggai called them not to be discouraged because this Temple would not be quite as richly decorated as Solomon's. He exhorted them to turn from the uncleanness of their ways and to trust in God's sovereign power. The Book of Haggai is a reminder of the problems the people of God faced at this time, how the people courageously trusted in God, and how God provided for their needs.

## Key Verses:

[Haggai 1:4](#), "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

[Haggai 1:5-6](#), "Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.'"

[Haggai 2:9](#), "'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty."

**Brief Summary:** Will the people of God reconsider their priorities, take courage, and act on the basis of God's promises? God sought to warn the people to heed His words. Not only did God warn them, but He also offered promises through His servant Haggai to motivate them to follow Him. Because the people of God reversed their priorities and failed to put God in first place in their lives, Judah was sent into Babylonian exile. In response to Daniel's prayer and in fulfillment of God's promises, God directed Cyrus the Persian king to allow the Jews in exile to go back to Jerusalem. A group of Jews returned to their land with great joy, put God first in their lives, worshiped Him, and began to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem without the aid of the local people who lived in Israel. Their courageous faith was met with opposition from the local people as well as

the Persian government for approximately 15 years.

**Foreshadowings:** As with most of the books of the minor prophets, Haggai ends with promises of restoration and blessing. In the last verse, [Haggai 2:23](#), God uses a distinctly messianic title in reference to Zerubbabel, "My Servant" (Compare [2 Samuel 3:18](#); [1 Kings 11:34](#); [Isaiah 42:1-9](#); [Ezekiel 37:24,25](#)). Through Haggai, God promises to make him like a signet ring, which was a symbol of honor, authority, and power, somewhat like a king's scepter used to seal letters and decrees. Zerubbabel, as God's signet ring, represents the house of David and the resumption of the messianic line interrupted by the Exile. Zerubbabel reestablished the Davidic line of kings which would culminate in the millennial reign of Christ. Zerubbabel appears in the line of Christ on both Joseph's side ([Matthew 1:12](#)) and Mary's side ([Luke 3:27](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of Haggai draws attention to common problems most people face even today. Haggai asks us 1) to examine our priorities to see if we are more interested in our own pleasures than doing the work of God; 2) to reject a defeatist attitude when we run into opposition or discouraging circumstances; 3) to confess our failures and seek to live pure lives before God; 4) to act courageously for God because we have the assurance that He is with us always and is in full control of our circumstances; and 5) to rest secure in God's hands knowing that He will abundantly bless us as we faithfully serve Him.



# Summary of the Book of Zechariah

**Author:** [Zechariah 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Zechariah as the [Prophet Zechariah](#).

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Zechariah was likely written in two primary segments, between 520 and 470 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** Zechariah emphasized that God has used His prophets to teach, warn, and correct His people. Unfortunately, they refused to listen. Their sin brought God's punishment. The book also bears evidence that even prophecy could be corrupted. History shows that in this period prophecy fell into disfavor among the Jews, leading to the period between the Testaments when no lasting prophetic voice spoke to God's people.

## Key Verses:

[Zechariah 1:3](#), "Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty."

[Zechariah 7:13](#), "'When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the LORD Almighty."

[Zechariah 9:9](#), "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

[Zechariah 13:9](#), "This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Zechariah teaches that salvation may be obtained by all. The last chapter depicts peoples from all over the world coming to worship God, who desires that all people follow Him. This is not the doctrine of universalism, i.e., that all people would be saved because it is God's nature to save. Rather, the book teaches that God desires that all people worship Him and accepts those who do, regardless of

their national or political expressions. Finally, Zechariah preached that God is sovereign over this world, any appearance to the contrary notwithstanding. His visions of the future indicate that God sees all that will happen. The depictions of God's intervention in the world teach that ultimately He will bring human events to the end He chooses. He does not eliminate the individual's freedom to follow God or rebel, but holds people responsible for the choices they make. In the last chapter, even the forces of nature respond to God's control.

**Foreshadowings:** Prophecies about Jesus Christ and the messianic era abound in Zechariah. From the promise that Messiah would come and dwell in our midst ([Zechariah 2:10-12](#); [Matthew 1:23](#)) to the symbolism of the Branch and the Stone ([Zechariah 3:8-9](#), [6:12-13](#); [Isaiah 11:1](#); [Luke 20:17-18](#)) to the promise of His Second Coming where they who pierced Him will look upon Him and mourn ([Zechariah 12:10](#); [John 19:33-37](#)), Christ is the theme of the Book of Zechariah. Jesus is the Savior of Israel, a fountain whose blood covers the sins of all who come to Him for salvation ([Zechariah 13:1](#); [1 John 1:7](#)).

**Practical Application:** God expects sincere worship and moral living of us today. Zechariah's example of breaking through national prejudice reminds us to reach out into all areas of our society. We must extend God's invitation of salvation to people of all national origins, languages, races, and cultures. That salvation is only available through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, who died in our place to atone for sin. But if we reject that sacrifice, there is no other sacrifice through which we can be reconciled to God. There is no other name under heaven by which men are saved ([Acts 4:12](#)). There is no time to lose; today is the day of salvation ([2 Corinthians 6:2](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Malachi

**Author:** [Malachi 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Malachi as the [Prophet Malachi](#). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Malachi? Who was the author of Malachi?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Malachi was written between 440 and 400 B.C.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Malachi is an oracle: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi (1:1). This was God's warning through Malachi to tell the people to turn back to God. As the final book of the Old Testament closes, the pronouncement of God's justice and the promise of His restoration through the coming Messiah is ringing in the ears of the Israelites. Four hundred years of silence ensues, ending with a similar message from God's next prophet, John the Baptist, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" ([Matthew 3:2](#)).

## Key Verses:

[Malachi 1:6](#), "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the LORD Almighty. It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name."

[Malachi 3:6-7](#), "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD Almighty."

**Brief Summary:** Malachi wrote the words of the Lord to God's chosen people who had gone astray, especially the priests who had turned from the Lord. Priests were not treating the sacrifices they were to make to God seriously. Animals with blemishes were being sacrificed even though the law demanded animals without defect ([Deuteronomy 15:21](#)). The men of Judah were dealing with the wives of their youth treacherously and wondering why God would not accept their sacrifices. Also, people were not tithing as they should have been ([Leviticus 27:30, 32](#)). But in spite of the people's sin and turning away from God, Malachi reiterates God's love for His people ([Malachi 1:1-5](#)) and His promises of a coming Messenger ([Malachi 2:17-3:5](#)).

**Foreshadowings:** [Malachi 3:1-6](#) is a prophecy concerning John the Baptist. He was the Messenger of the Lord sent to prepare the way ([Matthew 11:10](#)) for the Messiah, Jesus Christ. John preached repentance and baptized in the name of the Lord, thus preparing the way for Jesus' first advent. But the Messenger who comes "suddenly to the Temple" is Christ Himself in His second advent when He comes in power and might ([Matthew 24](#)). At that time, He will "purify the sons of Levi" (v. 3), meaning that those who exemplified the Mosaic Law would themselves need purification from sin through the blood of the Savior. Only then will they be able to offer "an offering in righteousness" because it will be the righteousness of Christ imputed to them through faith ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

**Practical Application:** God is not pleased when we do not obey His commands. He will repay those who disregard Him. As for God hating divorce (2:16), God takes the covenant of marriage seriously and He does not want it broken. We are to stay true to the spouse of our youth for a lifetime. God sees our hearts, so He knows what our intentions are; nothing can be hidden from Him. He will return and He will be the judge. But if we return to Him, He will return to us ([Malachi 3:6](#)).

# New Testament Survey

The New Testament is divided into five sections: the Gospels (Matthew through John), history (the book of Acts), the Pauline Epistles (Romans through Philemon), the [General Epistles](#) (Hebrews through Jude), and prophecy (the book of Revelation). The New Testament was written from approximately A.D. 45 to approximately A.D. 95. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek (common Greek, the everyday form of the Greek language in the first century A.D.)

The Gospels give us four different, yet not conflicting, accounts of the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospels demonstrate how Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and lay the foundation for the teaching of the rest of the New Testament. The book of Acts records the deeds of Jesus' apostles, the men Jesus sent out into the world to proclaim the Gospel of salvation. Acts tells us of the beginning of the church and its rapid growth in the first century A.D. The Pauline Epistles, written by the Apostle Paul, are letters to specific churches - giving official Christian doctrine and the practice that should follow that doctrine. The General Epistles compliment the Pauline Epistles with additional teaching and application. The book of Revelation prophesies the events that will occur in the end times.

A survey of the New Testament is a powerful and rewarding study. The New Testament tells us of Jesus' death on the cross on our behalf - and what our response should be to His death. The New Testament focuses on giving solid Christian teaching along with the practical results that should follow that teaching. Below are links to summaries of the various books of the New Testament. We sincerely hope you find our New Testament Survey beneficial in your walk with Christ.

# Summary of the Gospel of Matthew

**Author:** This book is known as the Gospel of Matthew because it was written by the apostle of the same name. The style of the book is exactly what would be expected of a man who was once a tax collector. Matthew has a keen interest in accounting (18:23-24; 25:14-15). The Gospel of Matthew is very orderly and concise. Rather than write in chronological order, Matthew arranges this Gospel through six discussions.

As a tax collector, Matthew possessed a skill that makes his writing all the more exciting for Christians. Tax collectors were expected to be able to write in a form of shorthand, which essentially meant that Matthew could record a person's words as they spoke, word for word. This ability means that the words of Matthew are not only inspired by the Holy Spirit, but should represent an actual transcript of some of Christ's sermons. For example, the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in chapters 5-7, is almost certainly a perfect recording of that great message. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Matthew? Who was the author of Matthew?](#)

**Date of Writing:** As an apostle, Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew in the early period of the church, probably in A.D. 55-65. This was a time when most Christians were Jewish converts, so Matthew's focus on Jewish perspective in this Gospel is understandable.

**Purpose of Writing:** Matthew intends to prove to the Jews that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. More than any other Gospel, the Gospel of Matthew quotes the Old Testament to show how Jesus fulfilled the words of the Jewish prophets. Matthew describes in detail the lineage of Jesus from David, and uses many forms of speech that Jews would have been comfortable with. Matthew's love and concern for his people is apparent through his meticulous approach to telling the gospel story.

## Key Verses:

[Matthew 5:17](#): "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

[Matthew 5:43-44](#): "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

[Matthew 6:9-13](#): "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"

[Matthew 16:26](#): "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

[Matthew 22:37-40](#): "Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two."

[Matthew 27:31](#): "After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him."

[Matthew 28:5-6](#): "The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.'"

[Matthew 28:19-20](#): "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Brief Summary:** The Gospel of Matthew discusses the lineage, birth, and early life of Christ in the first two chapters. From there, the book discusses the ministry of Jesus. The descriptions of Christ's teachings are arranged around "discourses" such as the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5 through 7. Chapter 10 involves the mission and purpose of the disciples; chapter 13 is a collection of parables; chapter 18 discusses the church; chapter 23 begins a discourse about hypocrisy and the future. Chapters 21 through 27 discuss the arrest, torture, and execution of Jesus. The final chapter describes the Resurrection and the Great Commission.

**Connections:** Because Matthew's purpose is to present Jesus Christ as the King and Messiah of Israel, he quotes from the Old Testament more than any of the other three Gospel writers. Matthew quotes more than 60 times from prophetic passages of the Old Testament, demonstrating how Jesus fulfilled them. He begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus, tracing Him back to Abraham, the progenitor of the Jews. From

there, Matthew quotes extensively from the prophets, frequently using the phrase “as was spoken through the prophet(s)” ([Matthew 1:22-23](#), [2:5-6](#), [2:15](#), [4:13-16](#), [8:16-17](#), [13:35](#), [21:4-5](#)). These verses refer to the Old Testament prophecies of His virgin birth ([Isaiah 7:14](#)) in Bethlehem ([Micah 5:2](#)), His return from Egypt after the death of Herod ([Hosea 11:1](#)), His ministry to the Gentiles ([Isaiah 9:1-2](#); [60:1-3](#)), His miraculous healings of both body and soul ([Isaiah 53:4](#)), His speaking in parables ([Psalm 78:2](#)), and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem ([Zechariah 9:9](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Gospel of Matthew is an excellent introduction to the core teachings of Christianity. The logical outline style makes it easy to locate discussions of various topics. Matthew is especially useful for understanding how the life of Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Matthew’s intended audience was his fellow Jews, many of whom—especially the Pharisees and Sadducees—stubbornly refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah. In spite of centuries of reading and studying the Old Testament, their eyes were blinded to the truth of who Jesus was. Jesus rebuked them for their hard hearts and their refusal to recognize the One they had supposedly been waiting for ([John 5:38-40](#)). They wanted a Messiah on their own terms, one who would fulfill their own desires and do what they wanted Him to do. How often do we seek God on our own terms? Don’t we reject Him by ascribing to Him only those attributes we find acceptable, the ones that make us feel good—His love, mercy, grace—while rejecting those we find objectionable—His wrath, justice, and holy anger? We dare not make the mistake of the Pharisees, creating God in our own image and then expecting Him to live up to our standards. Such a god is nothing more than an idol. The Bible gives us more than enough information about the true nature and identity of God and Jesus Christ to warrant our worship and our obedience.



# Summary of the Gospel of Mark

**Author:** Although the Gospel of Mark does not name its author, it is the unanimous testimony of early church fathers that Mark was the author. He was an associate of the Apostle Peter, and evidently his spiritual son ([1 Peter 5:13](#)). From Peter he received first-hand information of the events and teachings of the Lord, and preserved the information in written form.

It is generally agreed that Mark is the [John Mark](#) of the New Testament ([Acts 12:12](#)). His mother was a wealthy and prominent Christian in the Jerusalem church, and probably the church met in her home. Mark joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but not on the second because of a strong disagreement between the two men ([Acts 15:37-38](#)). However, near the end of Paul's life he called for Mark to be with him ([2 Timothy 4:11](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Mark? Who was the author of Mark?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Gospel of Mark was likely one of the first books written in the New Testament, probably in A.D. 55-59.

**Purpose of Writing:** Whereas Matthew is written primarily to his fellow Jews, Mark's gospel appears to be targeted to the Roman believers, particularly Gentiles. Mark wrote as a pastor to Christians who previously had heard and believed the Gospel ([Romans 1:8](#)). He desired that they have a biographical story of Jesus Christ as Servant of the Lord and Savior of the world in order to strengthen their faith in the face of severe persecution and to teach them what it meant to be His disciples.

## Key Verses:

[Mark 1:11](#): "And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'"

[Mark 1:17](#): "'Come, follow Me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.'"

[Mark 10:14-15](#): "He said to them, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'"

[Mark 10:45](#): "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 12:33](#): "To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

[Mark 16:6](#): "'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.'"

**Brief Summary:** This gospel is unique because it emphasizes Jesus' actions more than His teaching. It is simply written, moving quickly from one episode in the life of Christ to another. It does not begin with a genealogy as in Matthew, because Gentiles would not be interested in His lineage. After the introduction of Jesus at His baptism, Jesus began His public ministry in Galilee and called the first four of His twelve disciples. What follows is the record of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Mark's account is not just a collection of stories, but a narrative written to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah, not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well. In a dynamic profession, the disciples, led by Peter, acknowledged their faith in Him ([Mark 8:29-30](#)), even though they failed to understand fully His Messiahship until after His resurrection.

As we follow His journeys through Galilee, the surrounding areas, and then to Judea, we realize what a rapid pace He set. He touched the lives of many people, but He left an indelible mark on His disciples. At the transfiguration ([Mark 9:1-9](#)), He gave three of them a preview of His future return in power and glory, and again it was revealed to them who He was.

However, in the days leading to His final trip to Jerusalem, we see them bewildered, fearful and doubting. At Jesus' arrest, He stood alone after they fled. In the following hours of the mock trials, Jesus boldly proclaimed that He is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, and that He would be triumphant at His return ([Mark 14:61-62](#)). The climactic events surrounding the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection were not witnessed by most of His disciples. But several faithful women did witness His passion. After the Sabbath, early in the morning of the first day of the week, they went to the tomb with burial spices. When they saw the stone had been rolled away, they entered the tomb. It was not the body of Jesus they saw, but an angel robed in white. The joyful message they received was, "He is risen!" Women were the first evangelists, as they spread the good news of His resurrection. This same message has been broadcast throughout the world in the following centuries down to us today.

**Connections:** Because Mark's intended audience was the Gentiles, he does not quote as

frequently from the Old Testament as Matthew, who was writing primarily to the Jews. He does not begin with a genealogy to link Jesus with the Jewish patriarchs, but begins instead with His baptism, the beginning of His earthly ministry. But even there, Mark quotes from an Old Testament prophecy regarding the messenger—John the Baptist—who would exhort the people to “prepare the way for the Lord” ([Mark 1:3](#); [Isaiah 40:3](#)) as they awaited the coming of their Messiah.

Jesus does refer to the Old Testament in several passages in Mark. In [Mark 7:6](#), Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their superficial worship of God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him and refers to their own prophet, Isaiah, to convict them of their hardheartedness ([Isaiah 29:13](#)). Jesus referred to another Old Testament prophecy which was to be fulfilled that very night as the disciples would be scattered like sheep without a shepherd when Jesus was arrested and put to death ([Mark 14:27](#); [Zechariah 13:7](#)). He referred again to Isaiah when He cleansed the Temple of the money-changers ([Mark 11:15-17](#); [Isaiah 56:7](#); [Jeremiah 7:11](#)) and to the Psalms when He explained that He was the chief Cornerstone of our faith and of the Church ([Mark 12:10-11](#); [Psalm 118:22-23](#)).

**Practical Application:** Mark presents Jesus as the suffering Servant of God ([Mark 10:45](#)) and as the One who came to serve and sacrifice for us, in part to inspire us to do the same. We are to minister as He did, with the same greatness of humility and devotion to the service of others. Jesus exhorted us to remember that to be great in God’s kingdom, we must be the servant of all ([Mark 10:44](#)). Self-sacrifice should transcend our need for recognition or reward, just as Jesus was willing to be abased as He lay down His life for the sheep.

# Summary of the Gospel of Luke

**Author:** The Gospel of Luke does not identify its author. From [Luke 1:1-4](#) and [Acts 1:1-3](#), it is clear that the same author wrote both Luke and Acts, addressing both to “most excellent Theophilus,” possibly a Roman dignitary. The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that Luke, a physician and a close companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote both Luke and Acts ([Colossians 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#)). This would make Luke the only Gentile to pen any books of Scripture. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Luke? Who was the author of Luke?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Gospel of Luke was likely written between A.D. 58 and 65.

**Purpose of Writing:** As with the other two synoptic gospels—Matthew and Mark—this book’s purpose is to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ and all He “began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven” ([Acts 1:1-2](#)). The Gospel of Luke is unique in that it is a meticulous history—an “orderly account” ([Luke 1:3](#)) consistent with Luke’s medical mind—often giving details the other accounts omit. Luke’s history of the life of the Great Physician emphasizes His ministry to—and compassion for—Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax collectors, sinners, and others regarded as outcasts in Israel.

## Key Verses:

[Luke 2:4-7](#): “So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

[Luke 3:16](#), “John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’”

[Luke 4:18-19](#), [21](#): “‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

[Luke 18:31-33](#): "Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.'"

[Luke 23:33-34](#): "When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'"

[Luke 24:1-3](#): "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus."

**Brief Summary:** Called the most beautiful book ever written, the Gospel of Luke begins by telling us about Jesus' parents; the birth of His cousin, John the Baptist; Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born in a manger; and the genealogy of Christ through Mary. Jesus' public ministry reveals His perfect compassion and forgiveness through the stories of the prodigal son, the rich man and Lazarus, and the Good Samaritan. While many believe in this unprejudiced love that surpasses all human limits, many others—especially the religious leaders—challenge and oppose the claims of Jesus. Christ's followers are encouraged to count the cost of discipleship, while His enemies seek His death on the cross. Finally, Jesus is betrayed, tried, sentenced and crucified. But the grave cannot hold Him! His Resurrection assures the continuation of His ministry of seeking and saving the lost.

**Connections:** Since Luke was a Gentile, his references to the Old Testament are relatively few compared to those in Matthew's gospel, and most of the OT references are in the words spoken by Jesus rather than in Luke's narration. Jesus used the Old Testament to defend against Satan's attacks, answering him with "It is written" ([Luke 4:1-13](#)); to identify Himself as the promised Messiah ([Luke 4:17-21](#)); to remind the Pharisees of their inability to keep the Law and their need of a Savior ([Luke 10:25-28](#), [18:18-27](#)); and to confound their learning when they tried to trap and trick Him ([Luke 20](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Gospel of Luke gives us a beautiful portrait of our compassionate Savior. Jesus was not "turned off" by the poor and the needy; in fact, they were a primary focus of His ministry. Israel at the time of Jesus was a very class-conscious society. The weak and downtrodden were literally powerless to improve their lot in life and were especially open to the message that "the kingdom of God is near you" ([Luke 10:9](#)). This is a message we must carry to those around us who desperately

need to hear it. Even in comparatively wealthy countries—perhaps especially so—the spiritual need is dire. Christians must follow the example of Jesus and bring the good news of salvation to the spiritually poor and needy. The kingdom of God is near and the time grows shorter every day.

# Summary of the Gospel of John

**Author:** [John 21:20–24](#) describes the author of the gospel of John as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and for both historical and internal reasons this is understood to be [John the Apostle](#), one of the sons of Zebedee ([Luke 5:10](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of John? Who was the author of John?](#)

**Date of Writing:** Discovery of certain papyrus fragments dated around AD 135 require the gospel of John to have been written, copied, and circulated before then. And, while some think it was written before Jerusalem was destroyed (AD 70), AD 85—90 is a more accepted time for the writing of the gospel of John.

**Purpose of Writing:** The author cites the purpose of the gospel of John as follows: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” ([John 20:31](#), NKJV). Unlike the three [Synoptic Gospels](#), John’s purpose is not to present a chronological narrative of the life of Christ but to display His deity. John sought to strengthen the faith of second-generation believers and bring about faith in others, but he also sought to correct a false teaching that was spreading in the first century. John emphasized Jesus Christ as “the Son of God,” fully God and fully man, contrary to a false doctrine that taught the “Christ-spirit” came upon the human Jesus at His baptism and left Him at the crucifixion.

## Key Verses:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” ([John 1:1, 14](#), NKJV).

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” ([John 1:29](#), NKJV).

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” ([John 3:16](#), NKJV).

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent!’” ([John 6:29](#), NKJV).

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that

they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" ([John 10:10](#), NKJV).

"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" ([John 10:28](#), NKJV).

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" ([John 11:25–26](#), NKJV).

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" ([John 13:35](#), NKJV).

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" ([John 14:6](#), NKJV).

"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father"?''" ([John 14:9](#), NKJV).

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" ([John 17:17](#), NKJV).

"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" ([John 19:30](#), NKJV).

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" ([John 20:29](#), NKJV).

**Brief Summary:** The gospel of John includes only seven miracles—John calls them "signs"—to demonstrate the deity of Christ and illustrate His ministry. Some of these miracles and stories, such as the raising of Lazarus, are found only in John. His is the most theological of the four Gospels, and he often gives the reason behind events mentioned in the other gospels. The gospel of John shares much about the approaching ministry of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension. There are certain words or phrases that create a recurring theme in the gospel of John: *believe, witness, Comforter, life – death, light – darkness, I am, and love.*

The gospel of John introduces Jesus Christ, not from His birth, but from "the beginning," before creation. John calls Jesus "the Word" ([Logos](#)) who, as God Himself, was involved in every aspect of creation ([John 1:1–3](#)) and who later became flesh (verse 14) in order that He might take away our sins as the spotless Lamb of God (verse 29). The gospel of



John includes several spiritual conversations, such as Jesus' talk with the Samaritan woman that shows Him as the Messiah ([John 4:26](#)) and Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus that explains salvation through His vicarious death on the cross ([John 3:14-16](#)). In the gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly angers the Jewish leaders by correcting them ([John 2:13-16](#)); healing on the Sabbath, and claiming traits belonging only to God ([John 5:18](#); [8:56-59](#); [9:6](#), [16](#); [10:33](#)).

The last nine chapters of the gospel of John deal with the final week of Jesus' life. Jesus prepares His disciples for His coming death and for their ministry after His resurrection and ascension ([John 14-17](#)). He then willingly dies on the cross in our place ([John 10:15-18](#)), paying our sin debt in full ([John 19:30](#)) so that whoever trusts in Him will be saved ([John 3:14-16](#)). Jesus then rises from the dead, convincing even the most doubting of His disciples that He is God and Master ([John 20:24-29](#)).

**Connections:** The gospel of John's portrayal of Jesus as the God of the Old Testament is seen most emphatically in the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus. He is the "Bread of life" ([John 6:35](#)), provided by God to feed the souls of His people, just as He provided manna from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness ([Exodus 16:11-36](#)). Jesus is the "Light of the world" ([John 8:12](#)), the same Light that God promised to His people in the Old Testament ([Isaiah 30:26](#); [60:19-22](#)) and which will find its culmination in the New Jerusalem when Christ the Lamb will be its Light ([Revelation 21:23](#)). Two of the "I Am" statements refer to Jesus as both the "Good Shepherd" and the "Door of the sheep." Here are clear references to Jesus as the God of the Old Testament, the Shepherd of Israel ([Psalm 23:1](#); [80:1](#); [Jeremiah 31:10](#); [Ezekiel 34:23](#)) and, as the only Door into the sheepfold, the only way of salvation.

The Jews believed in the resurrection and, in fact, used the doctrine to try to trick Jesus into making statements they could use against Him. But His statement at the tomb of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life" ([John 11:25](#)), must have astounded them. He was claiming to be the cause of resurrection and in possession of the power of life and death. None other than God Himself could claim such a thing. Similarly, Jesus' claim to be "the way, the truth and the life" ([John 14:6](#)) linked Him unmistakably to the Old Testament. His is the "Way of Holiness" prophesied in [Isaiah 35:8](#); He established the City of Truth of [Zechariah 8:3](#) when He was in Jerusalem and preached the truths of the gospel. As "the Life," Jesus affirms His deity, the Creator of life, God incarnate ([John 1:1-3](#); [Genesis 2:7](#)). Finally, as the "true Vine" ([John 15:1](#), [5](#)), Jesus identifies Himself with the nation of Israel, who are called the vineyard of the Lord in many Old Testament passages. As the true Vine of the vineyard of Israel, He portrays Himself as the Lord of the "true Israel"—all those who would come to Him in faith (cf. [Romans 9:6](#)).

**Practical Application:** The gospel of John continues to fulfill its purpose of evangelizing the lost ([John 3:16](#) is likely the best-known Bible verse) and is often used in evangelistic Bible studies. In the recorded encounters between Jesus and Nicodemus and the woman at the well (chapters 3—4), we learn much from Jesus' model of personal evangelism. His comforting words to His disciples before His death ([John 14:1–6](#), [16](#); [16:33](#)) are still of great comfort in sorrowful times. Jesus' "high priestly prayer" for believers in chapter 17 is also a wonderful source of encouragement for believers. John's teachings concerning the deity of Christ ([John 1:1–3](#), [14](#); [5:22–23](#); [8:58](#); [14:8–9](#); [20:28](#)) are helpful in apologetics and provide a clear revelation of who Jesus is: [fully God and fully man](#).

# Summary of the Book of Acts

**Author:** The book of Acts, also called Acts of the Apostles, does not specifically identify its author. From [Luke 1:1–4](#) and [Acts 1:1–3](#), we know that the same author wrote both Luke and Acts. The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that [Luke](#), a companion of the apostle Paul, wrote the books of Luke and Acts ([Colossians 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Acts? Who was the author of Acts?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The book of Acts was likely written between AD 61 and 64.

**Purpose of Writing:** The book of Acts was written to provide a history of the early church. The emphasis of the book is the fulfillment of the [Great Commission](#). Acts records the apostles being Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding world. The book of Acts sheds light on the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers, guides, teaches, and serves as our Counselor. Reading the book of Acts, we are enlightened and encouraged by the power of the gospel as it spread throughout the world and transformed lives. Many miracles were performed during this time by the apostles to validate their message. The book of Acts covers the transitional time between the ascension of Christ and the completion of the New Testament canon, and the apostolic miracles were God's means of authenticating His message through the men who penned the Bible.

## Key Verses:

[Acts 1:8](#): "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 2:4](#): "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

[Acts 4:12](#): "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

[Acts 4:19–20](#): "But Peter and John replied, 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"

[Acts 9:3–6](#): "As [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven

flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'"

[Acts 16:31](#): "So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.'"

**Brief Summary:** The book of Acts gives the history of the Christian church and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as the mounting opposition to it. Although many faithful servants were used to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, Saul, also called Paul, was the most influential. Before he was converted, Paul zealously persecuted Christians. Paul's dramatic conversion on the [Damascus road \(Acts 9:1–31\)](#) is a highlight of the book of Acts. After his conversion he went to the opposite extreme of loving God and preaching His Word with power and fervency in the Spirit of the true and living God. The disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in Jerusalem ([Acts 1—8:3](#)), in Judea and Samaria (8:4—12:25), and to the ends of the earth (13:1—28:31). Included in the last section are Paul's three missionary journeys (13:1—21:16), his trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea (21:17—26:32) and his journey to Rome (27:1—28:31).

**Connections:** The book of Acts serves as a transition from the Old Covenant to the New. This transition is seen in several key events in Acts. First, there was a change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose primary function in the Old Testament was the external "anointing" of God's people, among them Moses ([Numbers 11:17](#)), Othniel ([Judges 3:8–10](#)), Gideon ([Judges 6:34](#)), and Saul ([1 Samuel 10:6–10](#)). After the ascension of Jesus, the Spirit came to live in the very hearts of believers ([Romans 8:9–11](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16](#)), guiding and empowering them from within. The indwelling Spirit is the gift of God to those who come to Him in faith.

Paul's conversion in [Acts 9](#) is a dramatic example of the power of God unto salvation (see [Romans 1:16](#)) and the opening of spiritually blinded eyes. Paul admitted that, prior to meeting the risen Savior, he was the most zealous of Israelites and was blameless "concerning righteousness based on the law" ([Philippians 3:6](#)), going so far as to persecute those who taught salvation by grace through faith in Christ. But, after his conversion, Paul realized that all his legalistic efforts were worthless, and he considered them "rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" ([Philippians 3:8–9](#)). Before he met Christ, Paul had been blinded by a pharisaical misinterpretation of the law and an inflated opinion of his own righteousness. After he met Christ, the "scales fell from Saul's

eyes," as it were ([Acts 9:18](#)). His boasting of his own goodness was replaced by his glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ ([Romans 3:27](#); [Galatians 6:14](#)).

Peter's vision of the sheet full of unclean animals in [Acts 10:9–15](#) is another sign of the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant's unity of Jew and Gentile in one universal Church. The "unclean" animals in Peter's vision symbolized the Gentiles, who were declared "cleansed" by God through the sacrificial death of Christ. The Old Covenant law had served its purpose (see [Galatians 3:23–29](#)), and both Jews and Gentiles are united in the New Covenant of grace through their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

**Practical Application:** God can do amazing things through ordinary people when He empowers them through His Spirit. The book of Acts shows how God essentially took a group of fisherman and commoners and used them to turn the world upside down ([Acts 17:6](#)). God took a Christian-hating murderer and transformed him into history's greatest Christian evangelist, the author of almost half the books of the New Testament. God used the persecution the Christians endured to help stimulate the incredibly rapid expansion of the fledgling church. God can and does do the same through us—changing our hearts, empowering us by the Holy Spirit, and giving us a passion to spread the good news of salvation through Christ. If we try to accomplish God's work in the world in our own power, we will fail. Like the disciples in [Acts 2](#), we must faithfully proclaim the gospel, trust God for the results, and devote ourselves "to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" ([Acts 2:42](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Romans

**Author:** [Romans 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Romans as the apostle Paul. [Romans 16:22](#) indicates that Paul used a man named [Tertius](#) to transcribe his words. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Romans? Who was the author of Romans?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Romans was likely written A.D. 56-58.

**Purpose of Writing:** As with all Paul's epistles to the churches, his purpose in writing was to proclaim the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ by teaching doctrine and edify and encourage the believers who would receive his letter. Of particular concern to Paul were those to whom this letter was written—those in Rome who were "loved by God and called to be saints" ([Romans 1:7](#)). Because he himself was a Roman citizen, he had a unique passion for those in the assembly of believers in Rome. Since he had not, to this point, visited the church in Rome, this letter also served as his introduction to them.

## Key Verses:

[Romans 1:16](#), "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of every one who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."

[Romans 3:9-11](#), "What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.'"

[Romans 3:21](#), "But now a righteousness from God apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and Prophets testify."

[Romans 3:23](#): "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

[Romans 5:8](#), "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

[Romans 6:23](#), "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

[Romans 8:9](#), "You however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."

[Romans 8:28](#): "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

[Romans 8:37-39](#), "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

[Romans 10:9-10](#), "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

[Romans 12:1](#), "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."

[Romans 12:19](#), "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."

[Romans 16:17](#), "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them."

**Brief Summary:** Paul was excited about being able to minister at last in this church, and everyone was well aware of that fact ([Romans 1:8-15](#)). The letter to the Romans was written from Corinth just prior to Paul's trip to Jerusalem to deliver the alms that had been given for the poor there. He had intended to go to Rome and then on to Spain ([Romans 15:24](#)), but his plans were interrupted when he was arrested in Jerusalem. He would eventually go to Rome as a prisoner. Phoebe, who was a member of the church at [Cenchrea](#) near Corinth ([Romans 16:1](#)), most likely carried the letter to Rome.

The Book of Romans is primarily a work of doctrine and can be divided into four sections: righteousness needed, 1:18–3:20; righteousness provided, 3:21–8:39; righteousness vindicated, 9:1–11:36; righteousness practiced, 12:1–15:13. The main theme of this letter is obvious of course—righteousness. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul

first condemns all men of their sinfulness. He expresses his desire to preach the truth of God's Word to those in Rome. It was his hope to have assurance they were staying on the right path. He strongly points out that he is not ashamed of the gospel ([Romans 1:16](#)), because it is the power by which everyone is saved.

The Book of Romans tells us about God, who He is and what He has done. It tells us of Jesus Christ, what His death accomplished. It tells us about ourselves, what we were like without Christ and who we are after trusting in Christ. Paul points out that God did not demand men have their lives straightened out before coming to Christ. While we were still sinners Christ died on a cross for our sins.

**Connections:** Paul uses several Old Testament people and events as illustrations of the glorious truths in the Book of Romans. Abraham believed and righteousness was imputed to him by his faith, not by his works ([Romans 4:1-5](#)). In [Romans 4:6-9](#), Paul refers to David who reiterated the same truth: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." Paul uses Adam to explain to the Romans the doctrine of [inherited sin](#), and he uses the story of Sarah and Isaac, the child of promise, to illustrate the principle of Christians being the children of the promise of the divine grace of God through Christ. In chapters 9–11, Paul recounts the history of the nation of Israel and declares that God has not completely and finally rejected Israel ([Romans 11:11-12](#)), but has allowed them to "stumble" only until the full number of the Gentiles will be brought to salvation.

**Practical Application:** The Book of Romans makes it clear that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. Every "good" deed we have ever done is as a filthy rag before God. So dead in our trespasses and sins are we that only the grace and mercy of God can save us. God expressed that grace and mercy by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place. When we turn our lives over to Christ, we are no longer controlled by our sin nature, but we are controlled by the Spirit. If we make confession that Jesus is Lord, and believe that He is raised from the dead, we are saved, born again. We need to live our lives offered to God as a living sacrifice to Him. Worship of the God who saved us should be our highest desire. Perhaps the best application of Romans would be to apply [Romans 1:16](#) and not be ashamed of the gospel. Instead, let us all be faithful in proclaiming it!



# Summary of the Book of 1 Corinthians

**Author:** [1 Corinthians 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of 1 Corinthians as the apostle Paul. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 1 Corinthians? Who was the author of 1 Corinthians?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 Corinthians was written in approximately A. D. 55.

**Purpose of Writing:** The apostle Paul founded the church in Corinth. A few years after leaving the church, the apostle Paul heard some disturbing reports about the Corinthian church. They were full of pride and were excusing sexual immorality. Spiritual gifts were being used improperly, and there was rampant misunderstanding of key Christian doctrines. The apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians in an attempt to restore the Corinthian church to its foundation—Jesus Christ.

## Key Verses:

[1 Corinthians 3:3](#): "You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?"

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#): "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

[1 Corinthians 10:31](#): "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

[1 Corinthians 12:7](#): "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

[1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#): "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. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

[1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#): "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

**Brief Summary:** The Corinthian church was plagued by divisions. The believers in Corinth were dividing into groups loyal to certain spiritual leaders ([1 Corinthians 1:12](#); [3:1-6](#)). Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers to be united because of devotion to Christ ([1 Corinthians 3:21-23](#)). Many in the church were essentially approving of an immoral relationship ([1 Corinthians 5:1-2](#)). Paul commanded them to expel the wicked man from the church ([1 Corinthians 5:13](#)). The Corinthian believers were taking each other to court ([1 Corinthians 6:1-2](#)). Paul taught the Corinthians that it would be better to be taken advantage of than to damage their Christian testimony ([1 Corinthians 6:3-8](#)).

Paul gave the Corinthian church instructions on marriage and celibacy (chapter 7), food sacrificed to idols (chapters 8 and 10), Christian freedom (chapter 9), the veiling of women ([1 Corinthians 11:1-16](#)), the Lord’s Supper ([1 Corinthians 11:17-34](#)), spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14), and the resurrection (chapter 15). Paul organized the book of 1 Corinthians by answering questions the Corinthian believers had asked him and by responding to improper conduct and erroneous beliefs they had accepted.

**Connections:** In chapter 10 of the Book of 1 Corinthians, Paul uses the story of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness to illustrate to the Corinthian believers the folly of the misuse of freedom and the danger of overconfidence. Paul has just warned the Corinthians about their lack of self-discipline ([1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#)). He goes on to describe the Israelites who, despite seeing God’s miracles and care for them—the parting of the Red Sea, the miraculous provision of manna from heaven and water from a rock—they misused their freedom, rebelled against God, and fell into immorality and idolatry. Paul exhorts the Corinthian church to note the example of the Israelites and avoid lusts and sexual immorality (vv. 6-8) and putting Christ to the test and complaining (vv. 9-10). See [Numbers 11:4](#), [34](#), [25:1-9](#); [Exodus 16:2](#), [17:2](#), [7](#).

**Practical Application:** Many of the problems and questions the Corinthian church was dealing with are still present in the church today. Churches today still struggle with divisions, with immorality, and with the use of spiritual gifts. The Book of 1 Corinthians very well could have been written to the church today and we would do well to heed Paul’s warnings and apply them to ourselves. Despite all the rebukes and corrections, 1 Corinthians brings our focus back to where it should be—on Christ. Genuine Christian love is the answer to many problems (chapter 13). A proper understanding of the resurrection of Christ, as revealed in chapter 15, and thereby a proper understanding of our own resurrection, is the cure for what divides and defeats us.

# Summary of the Book of 2 Corinthians

**Author:** [2 Corinthians 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of 2 Corinthians as the apostle Paul, possibly along with Timothy. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 2 Corinthians? Who was the author of 2 Corinthians?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 Corinthians was very likely written approximately A.D. 55-57.

**Purpose of Writing:** The church in Corinth began in AD 52 when Paul visited there on his second missionary journey. He stayed one and a half years, accomplishing much for the sake of the gospel. A record of this visit and the establishment of the church is found in [Acts 18:1-18](#).

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul expresses his relief and joy that the Corinthians had received his "severe" letter (now lost) in a positive manner. That letter addressed issues that were tearing the church apart, primarily the arrival of self-styled (false) apostles ([2 Corinthians 11:13](#)) who were assaulting Paul's character, sowing discord among the believers, and teaching false doctrine. They appear to have questioned his veracity ([2 Corinthians 1:15-17](#)), his speaking ability ([2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6](#)), and his unwillingness to accept support from the church at Corinth ([2 Corinthians 11:7-9; 12:13](#)). There were also some people in Corinth who had not repented of their licentious behavior, another reason he had sent the "severe" letter ([2 Corinthians 12:20-21](#)).

Paul was overjoyed to learn from Titus that the majority of Corinthians had repented of their rebellion against Paul ([2 Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:5-9](#)). The apostle encourages them for this in an expression of his genuine love ([2 Corinthians 7:3-16](#)). Paul also urged the Corinthians to finish collecting an offering for the poor (chapters 8-9) and to take a harder stance against false teachers (chapters 10-13). Finally, Paul vindicated his apostleship, as some in the church had likely questioned his authority ([2 Corinthians 13:3](#)).

## Key Verses:

[2 Corinthians 3:5](#): "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for

ourselves, but our competence comes from God."

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#): "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#): "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#): "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

[2 Corinthians 10:5](#): "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

[2 Corinthians 13:4](#): "For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you."

**Brief Summary:** After greeting the believers in the church at Corinth and explaining why he had not visited them as originally planned (vv. 1:3–2:2), Paul explains the nature of his ministry. Triumph through Christ and sincerity in the sight of God were the hallmarks of his ministry to the churches (2:14-17). He compares the glorious ministry of the righteousness of Christ to the "ministry of condemnation" which is the Law (v. 3:9) and declares his faith in the validity of his ministry in spite of intense persecution (4:8-18). Chapter 5 outlines the basis of the Christian faith—the new nature (v. 17) and the exchange of our sin for the righteousness of Christ (v. 21).

Chapters 6 and 7 find Paul defending himself and his ministry, assuring the Corinthians yet again of his sincere love for them and exhorting them to repentance and holy living. In chapters 8 and 9, Paul exhorts the believers at Corinth to follow the examples of the brothers in Macedonia and extend generosity to the saints in need. He teaches them the principles and rewards of gracious giving.

Paul ends his letter by reiterating his authority among them (chapter 10) and concern for their faithfulness to him in the face of fierce opposition from false apostles. He calls himself a "fool" for having to reluctantly boast of his qualifications and his suffering for Christ (chapter 11). He ends his epistle by describing the vision of heaven he was allowed to experience and the "thorn in the flesh" he was given by God to ensure his

humility (chapter 12). The last chapter contains his exhortation to the Corinthians to examine themselves to see whether what they profess is reality, and ends with a benediction of love and peace.

**Connections:** Throughout his epistles, Paul frequently refers to the Mosaic law, comparing it with the surpassing greatness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and salvation by grace. In [2 Corinthians 3:4-11](#), Paul contrasts the Old Testament law with the new covenant of grace, referring to the law as that which “kills” while the Spirit gives life. The law is the “ministry of death, written and engraved on stone” (v. 7; [Exodus 24:12](#)) because it brings only the knowledge of sin and its condemnation. The glory of the law is that it reflects the glory of God, but the ministry of the Spirit is much more glorious than the ministry of the law, because it reflects His mercy, grace and love in providing Christ as the fulfillment of the law.

**Practical Application:** This letter is the most biographical and least doctrinal of Paul’s epistles. It tells us more about Paul as a person and as a minister than any of the others. That being said, there are a few things we can take from this letter and apply to our lives today. One thing is stewardship, not only of money, but of time as well. The Macedonians not only gave generously, but “they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will” ([2 Corinthians 8:5](#)). In the same way, we should dedicate not only all we have to the Lord, but all that we are. He really doesn’t need our money. He is omnipotent! He wants the heart, one that longs to serve and please and love. Stewardship and giving to God is more than just money. Yes, God does want us to tithe part of our income, and He promises to bless us when we give to Him. There is more though. God wants 100%. He wants us to give Him our all. Everything we are. We should spend our lives living to serve our Father. We should not only give to God from our paycheck, but our very lives should be a reflection of Him. We should give ourselves first to the Lord, then to the church and the work of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

# Summary of the Book of Galatians

**Author:** [Galatians 1:1](#) clearly identifies the apostle Paul as the writer of the epistle to the Galatians.

**Date of Writing:** Galatians is likely the first New Testament book to be written, composed sometime soon after AD 49.

**Purpose of Writing:** The churches in Galatia were comprised of both Jewish and Gentile converts. Paul's purpose in writing to these churches was to confirm them in the faith, especially concerning justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the [Law of Moses](#).

Galatians was written because the churches of that region were facing a theological crisis. The essential truth of justification by faith rather than by human works was being denied by the [Judaizers](#)—legalistic Jews who insisted that Christians must keep the Mosaic Law. In particular, the Judaizers insisted on [circumcision](#) as a requirement for Gentiles who wished to be saved. In other words, convert to Judaism *first*, and then you are eligible to become a Christian. When Paul learned that this heresy was being taught to the Galatian churches, he composed an epistle to emphasize our liberty in Christ and to counter the perversion of the gospel that the Judaizers promoted.

## Key Verses:

[Galatians 2:16](#): "Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

[Galatians 2:20](#): "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

[Galatians 3:11](#): "Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

[Galatians 4:5-6](#): “to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

[Galatians 5:22-23](#): “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 6:7](#): “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

**Brief Summary:** The fact that we are justified by grace through faith means we have spiritual freedom. We are not under bondage to the dictates of the Old Testament Law. Paul soundly condemns anyone who would denigrate the grace of God and attempt to change the gospel ([Galatians 1:8–10](#)). He gives his apostolic credentials ([Galatians 1:11–2:14](#)) and emphasizes that righteousness comes through Christ not the works of the Law ([Galatians 2:21](#)). The Galatians must stand fast in their freedom and not be “entangled again with a yoke of bondage (that is, the Mosaic law)” ([Galatians 5:1](#)). Christian freedom is not an excuse to gratify one’s sin nature; rather, our freedom is an opportunity to love one another ([Galatians 5:13](#); [6:7–10](#)). The Christian life is to be lived in the power of the Spirit, not the flesh ([Galatians 5:16–18](#)). The [flesh](#) has been crucified with Christ ([Galatians 2:20](#)); as a consequence, the Spirit will bear [His fruit](#) in the life of the believer ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)).

In the end, the issue is not whether a person is circumcised but whether he is a “new creation” ([Galatians 6:15](#)). Salvation is the work of the Spirit, and we must be [born again](#) (see [John 3:3](#)). External religious rites such as circumcision are of no value in the realm of the Spirit.

**Connections:** Throughout Paul’s epistle to the Galatians, saving grace—the gift of God—is juxtaposed against the Law of Moses, which cannot save. The Judaizers urged a return to the Mosaic Law as the source of justification, and they were prominent in the early church. Even Peter was temporarily drawn into their web of deceit ([Galatians 2:11–13](#)). The themes connecting Galatians to the Old Testament center on Law vs. grace: the inability of the Law to justify (2:16); the believer’s deadness to the Law (2:19); Abraham’s justification by faith (3:6); the Law’s bringing not God’s salvation but His wrath (3:10); and love as the fulfillment of the Law (5:14). Believers are the spiritual children of [Sarah, not Hagar](#)—that is, we are children of the freewoman, not children of the slave; we have more in common with Isaac, the son of promise, than with Ishmael, the son of human effort (4:21–31).

The books of Galatians and James deal with two complementary aspects of Christianity.

Galatians highlights the gospel of grace that produces righteous living ([Galatians 3:13–14](#)). James highlights the righteous living that proves faith. There is no conflict; James, too, emphasizes the new birth through the gospel ([James 1:18](#)), and Galatians spends its final two chapters applying the doctrine of *sola gratia* to practical Christian living.

**Practical Application:** One of the main themes of the book of Galatians is found in 3:11: “The righteous shall live by faith.” We must stand firm in this truth. Any compromise with legalism or the mixture of human effort and the grace of God for salvation leads to heresy. If we could be saved through the keeping of the Law, then Jesus did not need to die ([Galatians 2:21](#)). Trying to save ourselves nullifies grace.

Not only are we saved by faith ([John 3:16](#); [Ephesians 2:8–9](#)), but the life of the believer in Christ—day by day, moment by moment—is lived by and through that faith ([Galatians 2:20](#)). Not that faith is something we conjure up on our own—it is the gift of God, not of works (see [Ephesians 2:8–9](#))—but it is our responsibility and joy to exhibit our faith so that others will see the work of Christ in us and to grow in our faith by the application of spiritual disciplines (Bible study, prayer, obedience, etc.).

Jesus said we would be known by the fruit of our lives ([Matthew 7:16](#)), which should give evidence of the faith within us. All Christians should be diligent in striving to build upon the saving faith within us so that our lives will reflect Christ and others will “glorify your Father who is in heaven” ([Matthew 5:16](#), NKJV).



# Summary of the Book of Ephesians

**Author:** [Ephesians 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Ephesians as the apostle Paul. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Ephesians? Who was the author of Ephesians?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Ephesians was very likely written between A.D. 60-63.

**Purpose of Writing:** Paul, writing from a Roman prison, intended that all who long for Christlike maturity would receive this writing. Enclosed within the Book of Ephesians is the discipline needed to develop into true children of God. Furthermore, a study in Ephesians will help to fortify and to establish the believer so he can fulfill the purpose and calling God has given. The aim of this epistle is to confirm and to equip a maturing church. It presents a balanced view of the body of Christ and its importance in God's economy.

## Key Verses:

[Ephesians 1:3](#): "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

[Ephesians 2:8-10](#): "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. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

[Ephesians 4:4-6](#): "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

[Ephesians 5:21](#): "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

[Ephesians 6:10-11](#): "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

**Brief Summary:** Doctrine occupies the greatest portion of the Book of Ephesians. Half of the teaching in this epistle relates to our standing in Christ, and the remainder of it

affects our condition. All too often those who teach from this book bypass all the foundational instruction and go directly to the closing chapter. It is this chapter that emphasizes the warfare or the struggle of the saints. However, to benefit fully from the contents of this epistle, one must begin at the beginning of Paul's instruction in this letter.

First, as followers of Christ, we must fully understand who God declares us to be. We must also become grounded in the knowledge of God's accomplishment for all humanity. Next, our present existence and walk must become exercised and strengthened. This must continue until we no longer totter or stagger back and forth with every spirit of teaching and subtlety of men.

Paul's writing breaks down into three main segments. (1) Chapters one through three introduce principles with respect to God's accomplishment. (2) Chapters four and five put forth principles regarding our present existence. (3) Chapter six presents principles concerning our daily struggle.

**Connections:** The primary link to the Old Testament in Ephesians is in the startling (to the Jews) concept of the church as the body of Christ ([Ephesians 5:32](#)). This amazing mystery (a truth not previously revealed) of the church, is that "the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" ([Ephesians 3:6](#)). This was a mystery completely hidden from the Old Testament saints ([Ephesians 3:5, 9](#)). The Israelites who were true followers of God always believed they alone were God's chosen people ([Deuteronomy 7:6](#)). Accepting Gentiles on an equal status in this new paradigm was extremely difficult and caused many disputes among Jewish believers and Gentile converts. Paul also speaks of the mystery of the church as the "bride of Christ," a previously unheard-of concept in the Old Testament.

**Practical Application:** Perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, the Book of Ephesians emphasizes the connection between sound doctrine and right practice in the Christian life. Far too many people ignore "theology" and instead want to only discuss things that are "practical." In Ephesians, Paul argues that theology is practical. In order to live out God's will for us in our lives practically, we must first understand who we are in Christ doctrinally.

# Summary of the Book of Philippians

**Author:** [Philippians 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Philippians as the apostle Paul, likely along with the help of Timothy. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Philippians? Who was the author of Philippians?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Philippians was written in approximately A.D. 61.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Epistle to the Philippians, one of Paul's prison epistles, was written in Rome. It was at Philippi, which the apostle visited on his second missionary journey ([Acts 16:12](#)), that Lydia and the Philippian jailer and his family were converted to Christ. Now, some few years later, the church was well established, as may be inferred from its address which includes "bishops (elders) and deacons" ([Philippians 1:1](#)).

The occasion of the epistle was to acknowledge a gift of money from the church at Philippi, brought to the apostle by Epaphroditus, one of its members ([Philippians 4:10-18](#)). This is a tender letter to a group of Christians who were especially close to the heart of Paul ([2 Corinthians 8:1-6](#)), and comparatively little is said about doctrinal error.

## Key Verses:

[Philippians 1:21](#): "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

[Philippians 3:7](#): "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ."

[Philippians 4:4](#): "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

[Philippians 4:6-7](#): "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

[Philippians 4:13](#): "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

**Brief Summary:** Philippians can be called "Resources Through Suffering." The book is about Christ in our life, Christ in our mind, Christ as our goal, Christ as our strength, and

joy through suffering. It was written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome, about thirty years after Christ's ascension and about ten years after Paul first preached at Philippi.

Paul was Nero's prisoner, yet the epistle fairly shouts with triumph, the words "joy" and "rejoice" appearing frequently ([Philippians 1:4, 18, 25, 26; 2:2, 28; Philippians 3:1, 4:1, 4, 10](#)). Right Christian experience is the outworking, whatever our circumstances may be, of the life, nature, and mind of Christ living in us ([Philippians 1:6, 11; 2:5, 13](#)). Philippians reaches its pinnacle at 2:5-11 with the glorious and profound declaration regarding the humiliation and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians may be divided as follows:

Introduction, 1:1-7

I. Christ the Christian's Life: Rejoicing in Spite of Suffering, 1:8-30

II. Christ the Christian's Pattern: Rejoicing in Lowly Service, 2:1-30

III. Christ the Object of the Christian's Faith, Desire, and Expectation, 3:1-21

IV. Christ the Christian's Strength: Rejoicing Through Anxiety, 4:1-9

Conclusion, 4:10-23

**Connections:** As with many of his letters, Paul warned the new believers in the church of Philippi to beware of the tendency toward legalism which continually cropped up in the early churches. So tied to the Old Testament law were the Jews that there was a constant effort on the part of the Judaizers to return to the teaching of salvation by works. But Paul reiterated that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone and branded the Judaizers as "dogs" and "men who do evil." In particular, the legalists were insisting that the new believers in Christ should continue to be circumcised according to the requirements of the Old Covenant ([Genesis 17:10-12; Leviticus 12:3](#)). In this way, they attempted to please God by their own efforts and elevate themselves above the Gentile Christians who did not participate in the ritual. Paul explained that those who have been washed by the blood of the Lamb were no longer to perform the ritual that symbolized the need for a clean heart.

**Practical Application:** Philippians is one of Paul's most personal letters, and as such it has several personal applications to believers. Written during his imprisonment in Rome, Paul exhorts the Philippians to follow his example and be "encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly" ([Philippians 1:14](#)) during times of persecution. All Christians have experienced, at one time or another, the animosity of unbelievers against the gospel of Christ. This is to be expected. Jesus said that the world hated Him and it will hate His followers as well ([John 15:18](#)). Paul exhorts us to persevere in the face of persecution, to "stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel" ([Philippians 1:27](#)).

Another application of Philippians is the need for Christians to be united in humility. We are united with Christ and we need to strive to be united to one another in the same way. Paul reminds us to be "like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" and to put away conceit and selfishness, "but in humility consider others better than yourselves" looking out for the interest of others and caring for one another ([Philippians 2:2-4](#)). There would be far less conflict in churches today if we all took to heart Paul's advice.

Another application of Philippians is that of the joy and rejoicing which are found throughout his letter. He rejoices that Christ is being proclaimed ([Philippians 1:8](#)); he rejoices in his persecution (2:18); he exhorts others to rejoice in the Lord (3:1); and he refers to the Philippian brothers as his "joy and crown" (4:1). He sums up with this exhortation to believers: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say Rejoice" (4:4-7). As believers, we can rejoice and experience the peace of God by casting all our cares on Him, if we "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let [our] requests be made known to God" (4:6). Paul's joy, in spite of persecution and imprisonment, comes shining through this epistle, and we are promised the same joy he experienced when we center our thoughts on the Lord ([Philippians 4:8](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Colossians

**Author:** The apostle Paul was the primary writer of the Book of Colossians ([Colossians 1:1](#)). Timothy is also given some credit ([Colossians 1:1](#)).

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Colossians was likely written between A.D. 58-62.

**Purpose of Writing:** Paul wrote Colossians to warn the believers of doctrinal error and to spur them to continued growth in Christ. The first half of the Book of Colossians is a theological treatise that includes one of the most profound presentations of [Christology](#) anywhere in the New Testament. The second half is a mini-ethics course, addressing every area of Christian life. Paul progresses from the individual life to the home and family, from work to the way we should treat others. The theme of this book is the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His sufficiency in meeting our needs in every area.

## Key Verses:

[Colossians 1:15-16](#), "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him."

[Colossians 2:8](#), "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

[Colossians 3:12-13](#), "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

[Colossians 4:5-6](#), "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

**Brief Summary:** Colossians was written explicitly to defeat the heresy that had arisen in

Colosse, which endangered the existence of the church. While we do not know what was told to Paul, this letter is his response.

We can surmise based on Paul's response that he was dealing with a defective view of Christ (denying His real and true humanity and not accepting His full deity). Paul appears also to dispute the "Jewish" emphasis on circumcision and traditions ([Colossians 2:8-11](#); [3:11](#)). The heresy addressed appears to be either a Jewish-Gnosticism or a mix between Jewish asceticism and Greek (Stoic?) philosophy. He does a remarkable job in pointing us to the sufficiency of Christ.

The Book of Colossians contains doctrinal instruction about the deity of Christ and false philosophies (1:15-2:23), as well as practical exhortations regarding Christian conduct, including friends and speech (3:1-4:18).

**Connections:** As with all the early churches, the issue of Jewish legalism in Colosse was of great concern to Paul. So radical was the concept of salvation by grace apart from works that those steeped in Old Testament law found it very difficult to grasp. Consequently, there was a continual movement among the legalists to add certain requirements from the law to this new faith. Primary among them was the requirement of circumcision which was still practiced among some of the Jewish converts. Paul countered this error in [Colossians 2:11-15](#) in which he declares that circumcision of the flesh was no longer necessary because Christ had come. His was a circumcision of the heart, not the flesh, making the ceremonial rites of the Old Testament law no longer necessary ([Deuteronomy 10:16](#), [30:6](#); [Jeremiah 4:4](#), [9:26](#); [Acts 7:51](#); [Romans 2:29](#)).

**Practical Application:** Although Paul addresses many areas, the basic application for us today is the total and complete sufficiency of Christ in our lives, both for our salvation and our sanctification. We must know and understand the gospel so as not to be led astray by subtle forms of legalism and heresy. We must be on guard for any deviation that would diminish the centrality of Christ as Lord and Savior. Any "religion" that tries to equate itself with the truth using books that claim the same authority as the Bible, or which combines human effort with divine accomplishment in salvation must be avoided. Other religions cannot be combined with or added to Christianity. Christ gives us absolute standards of moral conduct. Christianity is a family, a way of life, and a relationship—not a religion. Good deeds, astrology, occultism and horoscopes do not show us God's ways. Only Christ does. His will is revealed in His word, His love letter to us; we must get to know it!

# Summary of the Book of 1 Thessalonians

**Author:** [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#) indicates that the Book of 1 Thessalonians was written by the apostle Paul, probably along with Silas and Timothy. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 1 Thessalonians? Who was the author of 1 Thessalonians?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 Thessalonians was written in approximately A.D. 50.

**Purpose of Writing:** In the church of Thessalonica there were some misunderstandings about the return of Christ. Paul desired to clear them up in his letter. He also writes it as an instruction in holy living.

## Key Verses:

[1 Thessalonians 3:5](#), "For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless."

[1 Thessalonians 3:7](#), "Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith."

[1 Thessalonians 4:14-17](#), "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

[1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#), "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

**Brief Summary:** The first three chapters are about Paul longing to visit the church in Thessalonica but not being able to because Satan stopped them ([1 Thessalonians 2:18](#)), and how Paul cared for them and was encouraged to hear how they had been. Paul then



prays for them ([1 Thessalonians 3:11-13](#)). In chapter 4, Paul is instructing the believers in Thessalonica on how to live, in Christ Jesus, a holy life ([1 Thessalonians 4:1-12](#)). Paul goes on to instruct them of a misconception they had. He tells them that the people who have died in Christ Jesus will also go to heaven when He comes back ([1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#), [5:1-11](#)). The book ends with final instructions of living the Christian life.

**Connections:** Paul reminds the Thessalonians that the persecution they were receiving from their "own countrymen" (v. 2:15), the Jews who rejected their Messiah, is the same that the Old Testament prophets suffered ([Jeremiah 2:30](#); [Matthew 23:31](#)). Jesus warned that true prophets of God would always be opposed by the unrighteous ([Luke 11:49](#)). In Colossians, Paul reminds them of that truth.

**Practical Application:** This book can be applied to many life situations. It gives us the confidence as Christians that dead or alive when Christ comes back we will be together with Him ([1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)). It assures us as Christians that we won't receive God's wrath ([1 Thessalonians 5:8-9](#)). It instructs us how to walk the Christian life daily ([1 Thessalonians 4-5](#)).

# Summary of the Book of 2 Thessalonians

**Author:** [2 Thessalonians 1:1](#) indicates that the Book of 2 Thessalonians was written by the apostle Paul, probably along with Silas and Timothy. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 2 Thessalonians? Who was the author of 2 Thessalonians?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 Thessalonians was likely written in AD 51-52.

**Purpose of Writing:** The church in Thessalonica still had some misconceptions about the Day of the Lord. They thought it had come already so they stopped with their work. They were being persecuted badly. Paul wrote to clear up misconceptions and to comfort them.

## Key Verses:

[2 Thessalonians 1:6-7](#), "God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with powerful angels."

[2 Thessalonians 2:13](#), "But we ought always thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."

[2 Thessalonians 3:3](#), "But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

[2 Thessalonians 3:10](#), "For even when we were with you we gave you this rule: If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

**Brief Summary:** Paul greets the church at Thessalonica and encourages and exhorts them. He commends them for what he hears they are doing in the Lord, and he prays for them ([2 Thessalonians 1:11-12](#)). In chapter 2, Paul explains what will happen in the Day of the Lord ([2 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#)). Paul then encourages them to stand firm and instructs them to keep away from idle men who don't live by the gospel ([2 Thessalonians 3:6](#)).

**Connections:** Paul refers to several Old Testament passages in his discourse on the end times, thereby confirming and reconciling the OT prophets. Much of his teaching on the end times in this letter is based on the prophet Daniel and his visions. In [2 Thessalonians 2:3-9](#), he refers to Daniel's prophecy regarding the "man of sin" ([Daniel 7-8](#)).

**Practical Application:** The Book of 2 Thessalonians is filled with information that explains the end times. It also exhorts us not to be idle and to work for what we have. There are also some great prayers in 2 Thessalonians that can be an example for us on how to pray for other believers today.

# Summary of the Book of 1 Timothy

**Author:** The Book of 1 Timothy was written by the apostle Paul ([1 Timothy 1:1](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of 1 Timothy? Who was the author of 1 Timothy?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 Timothy was written in A.D. 62-66.

**Purpose of Writing:** Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him in his responsibility for overseeing the work of the Ephesian church and possibly the other churches in the province of Asia ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)). This letter lays the foundation for ordaining elders ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#)), and provides guidance for ordaining people into offices of the church ([1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)). In essence, 1 Timothy is a leadership manual for church organization and administration.

## Key Verses:

[1 Timothy 2:5](#), "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

[1 Timothy 2:12](#), "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."

[1 Timothy 3:1-3](#), "Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money."

[1 Timothy 4:9-10](#), "This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe."

[1 Timothy 6:12](#), "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

**Brief Summary:** This is the first letter Paul wrote to Timothy, a young pastor who had been a help to Paul in his work. Timothy was a Greek. His mother was a Jewess and his father was Greek. Paul was more than just a mentor and leader to Timothy, he was like a father to him, and Timothy was like a son to Paul ([1 Timothy 1:2](#)). Paul begins the letter by urging Timothy to be on guard for false teachers and false doctrine. However, much of the letter deals with pastoral conduct. Paul instructs Timothy in worship (chapter 2) and developing mature leaders for the church (chapter 3). Most of the letter deals with pastoral conduct, warnings about false teachers, and the church's responsibility toward single members, widows, elders, and slaves. All throughout the letter, Paul encourages Timothy to stand firm, to persevere, and to remain true to his calling.

**Connections:** An interesting link to the Old Testament in the book of 1 Timothy is Paul's citation of the basis for considering church elders to be worthy of "double honor," and deserving of respect when it comes to being accused of wrongdoing ([1 Timothy 5:17-19](#)). [Deuteronomy 24:15](#); [25:4](#); and [Leviticus 19:13](#) all speak of the necessity to pay a worker what he has earned and to do it in a timely manner. Part of the Mosaic Law demanded that two or three witnesses were necessary to bring an accusation against a man ([Deuteronomy 19:15](#)). The Jewish Christians in the churches Timothy pastored would have been well aware of these Old Testament connections.

**Practical Application:** Jesus Christ is presented by Paul as the mediator between God and man ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)), the Savior to all who believe in Him. He is Lord of the church, and Timothy serves Him by pastoring His church. Thus, we find the main application of Paul's first letter to his "son in the faith." Paul instructs Timothy on matters of church doctrine, church leadership, and church administration. We can use those same instructions in governing our local assembly today. Likewise, the work and ministry of a pastor, the qualifications for an elder, and the qualifications of a deacon are just as important and pertinent today as they were in Timothy's day. Paul's first letter to Timothy amounts to an instruction book on leading, administering, and pastoring the local church. The instructions in this letter apply to any leader or prospective leader of Christ's church and are equally relevant today as they were in Paul's day. For those not called into leadership roles in their church, the book is still practical. Every follower must contend for the faith and avoid false teaching. Every follower must stand firm and persevere.

# Summary of the Book of 2 Timothy

**Author:** [2 Timothy 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of 2 Timothy as the apostle Paul. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 2 Timothy? Who was the author of 2 Timothy?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 Timothy was written in approximately A.D. 67, shortly before the apostle Paul was put to death.

**Purpose of Writing:** Imprisoned in Rome yet again, the apostle Paul felt lonely and abandoned. Paul recognized that his earthly life was likely coming to an end soon. The Book of 2 Timothy is essentially Paul's "last words." Paul looked past his own circumstances to express concern for the churches and specifically for Timothy. Paul wanted to use his last words to encourage Timothy, and all other believers, to persevere in faith ([2 Timothy 3:14](#)) and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)).

## Key Verses:

[2 Timothy 1:7](#), "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), "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 4:2](#), "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction."

[2 Timothy 4:7-8](#), "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

**Brief Summary:** Paul encourages Timothy to remain passionate for Christ and to remain firm in sound doctrine ([2 Timothy 1:1-2, 13-14](#)). Paul reminds Timothy to avoid ungodly beliefs and practices and to flee from anything immoral ([2 Timothy 2:14-26](#)). In the end times there will be both intense persecution and apostasy from the Christian faith ([2](#)

[Timothy 3:1-17](#)). Paul closes with an intense plea for believers to stand firm in the faith and to finish the race strong ([2 Timothy 4:1-8](#)).

**Connections:** So concerned was Paul to warn Timothy and those he pastored of the dangers of false teachers that he invoked the story of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses ([Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18, 19; 9:11](#)). Although their names are not mentioned in the Old Testament, tradition has it that these men instigated the building of the golden calf and were killed with the rest of the idolaters ([Exodus 32](#)). Paul predicts the same fate for those who resist the truth of Christ, their folly eventually being made “clear to everyone” ([2 Timothy 3:9](#)).

**Practical Application:** It is easy to get side-tracked in the Christian life. We have to keep our eyes on the prize—being rewarded in heaven by Jesus Christ ([2 Timothy 4:8](#)). We must strive to avoid both false doctrine and ungodly practices. This can only be accomplished by being grounded in our knowledge of God’s Word and firm in our refusal to accept anything that is unbiblical.

# Summary of the Book of Titus

**Author:** [Titus 1:1](#) identifies the apostle Paul as the author of the Book of Titus. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Titus? Who was the author of Titus?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Epistle to Titus was written in approximately AD 66. Paul's many journeys are well documented and show that he wrote to Titus from Nicopolis in Epirus. In some Bibles a subscription to the epistle may show that Paul wrote from Nicopolis in Macedonia. However, there is no such place known and subscriptions have no authority as they are not authentic.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Epistle to Titus is known as one of the Pastoral Epistles as are the two letters to Timothy. This epistle was written by the apostle Paul to encourage his brother in the faith, Titus, whom he had left in Crete to lead the church which Paul had established on one of his missionary journeys ([Titus 1:5](#)). This letter advises Titus regarding what qualifications to look for in leaders for the church. He also warns Titus of the reputations of those living on the island of Crete ([Titus 1:12](#)).

In addition to instructing Titus in what to look for in a leader of the church, Paul also encouraged Titus to return to Nicopolis for a visit. In other words, Paul continued to disciple Titus and others as they grew in the grace of the Lord ([Titus 3:13](#)).

## Key Verses:

[Titus 1:5](#), "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."

[Titus 1:16](#), "They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good."

[Titus 2:15](#), "These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you."

[Titus 3:3-6](#), "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 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.”

**Brief Summary:** How wonderful it must have been when Titus received a letter from his mentor, the apostle Paul. Paul was a much-honored man, and rightly so, after establishing several churches throughout the eastern world. This famous introduction from the apostle would have been read by Titus: “To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior” ([Titus 1:4](#)).

The island of Crete where Titus was left by Paul to lead the church was inhabited by natives of the island and Jews who did not know the truth of Jesus Christ ([Titus 1:12-14](#)). Paul felt it to be his responsibility to follow through with Titus to instruct and encourage him in developing leaders within the church at Crete. As the apostle Paul directed Titus in his search for leaders, Paul also suggested how Titus would instruct the leaders so that they could grow in their faith in Christ. His instructions included those for both men and women of all ages ([Titus 2:1-8](#)).

To help Titus continue in his faith in Christ, Paul suggested Titus come to Nicopolis and bring with him two other members of the church ([Titus 3:12-13](#)).

**Connections:** Once again, Paul finds it necessary to instruct the leaders of the church to be on guard against the Judaizers, those who sought to add works to the gift of grace which produces salvation. He warns against those who are rebellious deceivers, especially those who continued to claim circumcision and adherence to the rituals and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law were still necessary ([Titus 1:10-11](#)). This is a recurring theme throughout the epistles of Paul, and in the book of Titus, he goes so far as to say their mouths must be stopped.

**Practical Application:** The Book of Titus deserves our attention as we look to the Bible for instruction on how to live a life pleasing to our Lord. We can learn what we should avoid as well as that which we are to strive to imitate. Paul suggests we seek to be pure as we avoid the things which will defile our minds and consciences. And then Paul makes a statement which should never be forgotten: “They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good” ([Titus 1:16](#)). As Christians, we must examine ourselves to be sure our lives line up with our profession of faith in Christ ([2 Corinthians 13:5](#)).

Along with this warning, Paul also tells us how to avoid denying God: “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” ([Titus 3:5b-6](#)). By seeking a daily renewal

of our minds by the Holy Spirit we can develop into Christians that honor God by the way we live.

# Summary of the Book of Philemon

**Author:** The author of the Book of Philemon was the apostle Paul ([Philemon 1:1](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of Philemon? Who was the author of Philemon?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Philemon was written in approximately A. D. 60.

**Purpose of Writing:** The letter to Philemon is the shortest of all Paul's writings and deals with the practice of slavery. The letter suggests that Paul was in prison at the time of the writing. [Philemon](#) was a slave owner who also hosted a church in his home. During the time of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, Philemon had likely journeyed to the city, heard Paul's preaching and became a Christian. The slave [Onesimus](#) robbed his master, Philemon, and ran away, making his way to Rome and to Paul. Onesimus was still the property of Philemon, and Paul wrote to smooth the way for his return to his master. Through Paul's witnessing to him, Onesimus had become a Christian ([Philemon 10](#)) and Paul wanted Philemon to accept Onesimus as a brother in Christ and not merely as a slave.

## Key Verses:

[Philemon 6](#): "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ."

[Philemon 16](#): "...no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord."

[Philemon 18](#): "If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me."

**Brief Summary:** Paul had warned slave owners that they had a responsibility towards their slaves and showed slaves as responsible moral beings who were to fear God. In Philemon, Paul did not condemn slavery, but he presented Onesimus as a Christian brother instead of a slave. When an owner can refer to a slave as a brother, the slave has reached a position in which the legal title of slave is meaningless. The early church did not attack slavery directly but it laid the foundation for a new relationship between owner and slave. Paul attempted to unite both Philemon and Onesimus with Christian love so that emancipation would become necessary. Only after exposure to the light of

the gospel could the institution of slavery die.

**Connections:** Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament is the distinction between law and grace so beautifully portrayed. Both Roman law and the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament gave Philemon the right to punish a runaway slave who was considered property. But the covenant of grace through the Lord Jesus allowed both master and slave to fellowship in love on an equal basis in the body of Christ.

**Practical Application:** Employers, political leaders, corporation executives and parents can follow the spirit of Paul's teaching by treating Christian employees, co-workers and family members as members of Christ's Body. Christians in modern society must not view helpers as stepping stones to help them achieve their ambitions but as Christian brothers and sisters who must receive gracious treatment. In addition, all Christian leaders must recognize that God holds them accountable for the treatment of those who work for them, whether the helpers are Christians or not. They must eventually answer to God for their actions ([Colossians 4:1](#)).

# Summary of the Book of Hebrews

**Author:** Although some include the Book of Hebrews among the apostle Paul's writings, the certain identity of the author remains an enigma. Missing is Paul's customary salutation common to his other works. In addition, the suggestion that the writer of this epistle relied upon knowledge and information provided by others who were actual eye-witnesses of Christ Jesus (2:3) makes Pauline authorship doubtful. Some attribute Luke as its writer; others suggest Hebrews may have been written by Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Philip, or Aquila and Priscilla. Regardless of the human hand that held the pen, the Holy Spirit of God is the divine author of all Scripture ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)); therefore, Hebrews speaks with the same canonical authority as the other sixty-five books of the Bible.

**Date of Writing:** The early church father Clement quoted from the Book of Hebrews in A.D. 95. However, internal evidence such as the fact that Timothy was alive at the time the epistle was written and the absence of any evidence showing the end of the Old Testament sacrificial system that occurred with Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 indicates the book was written around A.D. 65.

**Purpose of Writing:** The late Dr. Walter Martin, founder of the Christian Research Institute and writer of the best-selling book *Kingdom of the Cults*, quipped in his usual tongue-in-cheek manner that the Book of Hebrews was written by a Hebrew to other Hebrews telling the Hebrews to stop acting like Hebrews. In truth, many of the early Jewish believers were slipping back into the rites and rituals of Judaism in order to escape the mounting persecution. This letter, then, is an exhortation for those persecuted believers to continue in the grace of Jesus Christ.

## Key Verses:

[Hebrews 1:1-2](#): "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."

[Hebrews 2:3](#): "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation..."

[Hebrews 4:14-16](#): "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do

not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

[Hebrews 11:1](#): "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

[Hebrews 12:1-2](#): "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 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."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Hebrews addresses three separate groups: believers in Christ, unbelievers who had knowledge of and an intellectual acceptance of the facts of Christ, and unbelievers who were attracted to Christ, but who rejected Him ultimately. It's important to understand which group is being addressed in which passage. To fail to do so can cause us to draw conclusions inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.

The writer of Hebrews continually makes mention of the superiority of Christ in both His personage and in His ministering work. In the writings of the Old Testament, we understand the rituals and ceremonies of Judaism symbolically pointed to the coming of Messiah. In other words, the rites of Judaism were but shadows of things to come. Hebrews tells us that Christ Jesus is better than anything mere religion has to offer. All the pomp and circumstance of religion pales in comparison to the person, work, and ministry of Christ Jesus. It is the superiority of our Lord Jesus, then, that remains the theme of this eloquently written letter.

**Connections:** Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament does the Old Testament come into focus more than in the Book of Hebrews, which has as its foundation the Levitical priesthood. The writer to the Hebrews constantly compares the inadequacies of the Old Testament sacrificial system to the perfection and completion in Christ. Where the Old Covenant required continual sacrifices and a once-a-year atonement for sin offered by a human priest, the New Covenant provides a once-for-all sacrifice through Christ ([Hebrews 10:10](#)) and direct access to the throne of God for all who are in Him.

**Practical Application:** Rich in foundational Christian doctrine, the Epistle to the Hebrews also gives us encouraging examples of God's "faith heroes" who persevered in spite of great difficulties and adverse circumstances ([Hebrews 11](#)). These members of

God's Hall of Faith provide overwhelming evidence as to the unconditional surety and absolute reliability of God. Likewise, we can maintain perfect confidence in God's rich promises, regardless of our circumstances, by meditating upon the rock-solid faithfulness of God's workings in the lives of His Old Testament saints.

The writer of Hebrews gives ample encouragement to believers, but there are five solemn warnings we must heed. There is the danger of neglect ([Hebrews 2:1-4](#)), the danger of unbelief ([Hebrews 3:7-4:13](#)), the danger of spiritual immaturity ([Hebrews 5:11-6:20](#)), the danger of failing to endure ([Hebrews 10:26-39](#)), and the inherent danger of refusing God ([Hebrews 12:25-29](#)). And so we find in this crowning masterpiece a great wealth of doctrine, a refreshing spring of encouragement, and a source of sound, practical warnings against slothfulness in our Christian walk. But there is still more, for in Hebrews we find a magnificently rendered portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Author and Finisher of our great salvation ([Hebrews 12:2](#)).

# Summary of the Book of James

**Author:** The author of this epistle (letter) is James, also called James the Just, who is thought to be the brother of Jesus Christ ([Matthew 13:55](#); [Mark 6:3](#)). James was not a believer ([John 7:3-5](#)) until after the resurrection ([Acts 1:14](#); [1 Corinthians 15:7](#); [Galatians 1:19](#)). He became the head of the Jerusalem church and is mentioned first as a pillar of the church ([Galatians 2:9](#)). Full article: [Who wrote the book of James? Who was the author of James?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of James is probably the oldest book of the New Testament, written perhaps as early as A.D. 45, before the first council of Jerusalem in A.D. 50. James was martyred in approximately A.D. 62, according to the historian Josephus.

**Purpose of Writing:** Some think that this epistle was written in response to an overzealous interpretation of Paul's teaching regarding faith. This extreme view, called antinomianism, held that through faith in Christ one is completely free from all Old Testament law, all legalism, all secular law, and all the morality of a society. The Book of James is directed to Jewish Christians scattered among all the nations ([James 1:1](#)). Martin Luther, who detested this letter and called it "the epistle of straw," failed to recognize that James's teaching on works complemented—not contradicted—Paul's teaching on faith. While Pauline teachings concentrate on our justification with God, James' teachings concentrate on the works that exemplify that justification. James was writing to Jews to encourage them to continue growing in this new Christian faith. James emphasizes that good actions will naturally flow from those who are filled with the Spirit and questions whether someone may or may not have a saving faith if the fruits of the Spirit cannot be seen, much as Paul describes in [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

## Key Verses:

[James 1:2-3](#): "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."

[James 1:19](#): "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

[James 2:17-18](#): "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do."



[James 3:5](#): "Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark."

[James 5:16b](#): "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of James outlines the faith walk through genuine religion (1:1-27), genuine faith (2:1-3:12) and genuine wisdom (3:13-5:20). This book contains a remarkable parallel to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in [Matthew 5-7](#). James begins in the first chapter by describing the overall traits of the faith walk. In chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3 he discusses social justice and a discourse on faith in action. He then compares and contrasts the difference between worldly and godly wisdom and asks us to turn away from evil and draw close to God. James gives a particularly severe rebuke to the rich who hoard and those who are self-reliant. Finally he ends with encouragement to believers to be patient in suffering, praying and caring for one another and bolstering our faith through fellowship.

**Connections:** The Book of James is the ultimate description of the relationship between faith and works. So ingrained in the Mosaic Law and its system of works were the Jewish Christians to whom James wrote that he spent considerable time explaining the difficult truth that no one is justified by the works of the law ([Galatians 2:16](#)). He declares to them that even if they try their very best to keep all the various laws and rituals, doing so is impossible, and transgressing the tiniest part of the law made them guilty of all of it ([James 2:10](#)) because the law is one entity and breaking one part of it is breaking all of it.

**Practical Application:** We see in the Book of James a challenge to faithful followers of Jesus Christ to not just "talk the talk," but to "walk the walk." While our faith walk, to be certain, requires a growth of knowledge about the Word, James exhorts us to not stop there. Many Christians will find this epistle challenging as James presents 60 obligations in only 108 verses. He focuses on the truths of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount and motivates us to act upon what He taught.

The epistle also puts to rest the idea that one can become a Christian and yet continue living in sin, exhibiting no fruit of righteousness. Such a "faith," James declares, is shared by the demons who "believe and tremble" ([James 2:19](#)). Yet such a "faith" cannot save because it is not verified by the works that always accompany true saving faith ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). Good works are not the cause of salvation, but they are the result of it.

# Summary of the Book of 1 Peter

**Author:** [1 Peter 1:1](#) identifies the author of the Book of 1 Peter as the apostle Peter.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 Peter was likely written between A.D. 60 and 65.

**Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished, and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message, and Christ's example was the one to follow.

## Key Verses:

[1 Peter 1:3](#), "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

[1 Peter 2:9](#), "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

[1 Peter 2:24](#), "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

[1 Peter 5:8-9](#), "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

**Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.

**Connections:** Peter's familiarity with the Old Testament law and prophets enabled him to explain various OT passages in light of the life and work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In [1 Peter 1:16](#), he quotes [Leviticus 11:44](#): "Be holy, for I am holy." But he prefaces it by explaining that holiness is not achieved by keeping the law, but by the grace bestowed upon all who believe in Christ (v. 13). Further, Peter explains the reference to the "cornerstone" in [Isaiah 28:16](#) and [Psalm 118:22](#) as Christ, who was rejected by the Jews through their disobedience and unbelief. Additional Old Testament references include the sinless Christ ([1 Peter 2:22](#) / [Isaiah 53:9](#)) and admonitions to holy living through the power of God which yields blessings ([1 Peter 3:10:12](#); [Psalm 34:12-16](#); [1 Peter 5:5](#); [Proverbs 3:34](#)).

**Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "[holier than thou](#)." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

# Summary of the Book of 2 Peter

**Author:** [2 Peter 1:1](#) specifically states that the apostle Peter was the author of 2 Peter. Peter's authorship of 2 Peter has been challenged more than that of any other book in the New Testament. However, the early church fathers found no good reason to reject it. We find no good reason to reject Peter's authorship of 2 Peter. Full article: [Who wrote the book of 2 Peter? Who was the author of 2 Peter?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 Peter was written toward the end of Peter's life. Since Peter was martyred in Rome during the reign of Nero, his death must have occurred prior to A.D. 68. He very likely wrote 2 Peter between A.D. 65 and 68.

**Purpose of Writing:** Peter was alarmed that false teachers were beginning to infiltrate the churches. He called on Christians to grow and become strong in their faith so that they could detect and combat the spreading apostasy. He strongly stressed the authenticity of the Word of God and the sure return of the Lord Jesus.

## Key Verses:

[2 Peter 1:3-4](#), "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

[2 Peter 3:9](#): "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

[2 Peter 3:18](#): But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen."

The key word is "knowledge," with its related words, occurring at least 13 times in the Book of 2 Peter.

**Brief Summary:** Knowing that his time was short ([2 Peter 1:13-15](#)) and these churches faced immediate danger ([2 Peter 2:1-3](#)), Peter called upon the readers to refresh their

memories ([2 Peter 1:13](#)) and stimulate their thinking ([2 Peter 3:1-2](#)) so that they would remember his teaching ([2 Peter 1:15](#)). He challenged the believers to become more mature in their faith by adding to it specific Christians virtues, thereby becoming effective and productive in their knowledge of Jesus Christ ([2 Peter 1:5-9](#)). The Old and New Testament writers were set forth as their authority for their faith ([2 Peter 1:12-21](#), [3:2](#), [3:15-16](#)). Peter desired they become strong in their faith to withstand the false teachers that had crept in and adversely affected the churches. In his denunciation of them, he described their conduct, their condemnation, and their characteristics (2 Peter chapter 2), and also that they ridiculed the Lord's Second Coming ([2 Peter 3:3-7](#)). For the Christians, Peter taught that the Second Coming is the incentive for holy living ([2 Peter 3:14](#)). After a final warning, Peter again encouraged them to grow in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He concluded with a word of praise to his Lord and Savior ([2 Peter 3:18](#)).

**Connections:** In his denunciation of false prophets, Peter repeats a prevalent Old Testament theme that must have been very familiar to his readers. Many of the early Christians were converted Jews who had been well taught in the law and the prophets. When Peter referred to the "word of the prophets" of the Old Testament in [2 Peter 1:19-21](#), he at one time denounced false prophets and affirmed that true prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit who spoke through them ([2 Samuel 23:2](#)). Jeremiah was equally forceful in his criticism of false prophets, asking, "How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds?" ([Jeremiah 23:26](#)). Clearly, the same deluded false teachers who plagued God's people in both the Old and New Testaments are still with us, making Peter's second epistle as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago.

**Practical Application:** Certainly, as Christians in the 21st century, we are nearer to our Lord's return than the first-century Christians to whom this epistle was written. Through television and other means of mass communications, mature Christians are aware that many charlatans are parading as true Christian leaders, and that immature Christians have been "taken in" by their quackery and false interpretation of Scriptures. It behooves all born-again Christians to be so grounded in the Word that we will be able to discern truth from error.

The same prescription for growth in faith that Peter gave ([2 Peter 1:5-11](#)), when applied to our lives, will assure us also a rich reward "into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" ([2 Peter 1:10-11](#)). The foundation for our faith is and always will be the same Word of God that Peter preached.

# Summary of the Book of 1 John

**Author:** 1, 2, and 3 John have from earliest times been attributed to the apostle John, who also wrote the Gospel of John. The content, style, and vocabulary seem to warrant the conclusion that these three epistles were addressed to the same readers as the Gospel of John.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 1 John was likely written between A.D. 85-95.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of 1 John seems to be a summary that assumes the readers' knowledge of the gospel as written by John and offers certainty for their faith in Christ. The first epistle indicates that the readers were confronted with the error of gnosticism, which became a more serious problem in the second century. As a philosophy of religion it held that matter is evil and spirit is good. The solution to the tension between these two was knowledge, or gnosis, through which man rose from the mundane to the spiritual. In the gospel message, this led to two false theories concerning the person of Christ, Docetism—regarding the human Jesus as a ghost—and Cerinthianism—making Jesus a dual personality, at times human and at times divine. The key purpose of 1 John is to set boundaries on the content of faith and to give believers assurance of their salvation.

## Key Verses:

[1 John 1:9](#), "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

[1 John 3:6](#), "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."

[1 John 4:4](#), "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

[1 John 5:13](#), "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

The key word is "knowledge," with its related words, occurring at least 13 times in the Book of 1 John.

**Brief Summary:** False spiritual teachers were a big problem in the early church. Because there was not a complete New Testament that believers could refer to, many churches fell prey to pretenders who taught their own ideas and advanced themselves as leaders. John wrote this letter to set the record straight on some important issues, particularly concerning the identity of Jesus Christ.

Because John's letter was about the basics of faith in Christ, it helped his readers reflect honestly on their faith. It helped them answer the question, Are we true believers? John told them that they could tell by looking at their actions. If they loved one another, that was evidence of God's presence in their lives. But if they bickered and fought all the time or were selfish and did not look out for one another, they were betraying that they, in fact, did not know God.

That did not mean they had to be perfect. In fact, John also recognized that believing involved admitting our sins and seeking God's forgiveness. Depending on God for cleansing from guilt, along with admitting our wrongs against others and making amends, was another important part of getting to know God.

**Connections:** One of the most often-quoted passages regarding sin is found in [1 John 2:16](#). In this passage, John describes the three aspects of sin that recall the first and most earth-shattering temptations in all of Scripture. The first sin—the disobedience of Eve—was the result of her yielding to the same three temptations as we find in [Genesis 3:6](#): the lust of the flesh (“good for food”); the lust of the eyes (“pleasing to the eye”); and the pride of life (“desirable for gaining wisdom”).

**Practical Application:** The Book of 1 John is a book of love and joy. It explains the fellowship we have with others and with Jesus Christ. It differentiates between happiness, which is temporary and fleeting, and true joy, which 1 John tells us how to achieve. If we take the words written by John and we apply them to our daily lives, the true love, commitment, fellowship, and joy we long for will be ours.

The apostle John knew Christ well. He is telling us that we can all have that close, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. We have the witness of men who had direct and personal contact with Him. The Gospel writers present their solidly based testimony on a historical reality. Now, how does that apply to our lives? It explains to us that Jesus came here as the Son of God to create a union with us based on His grace, mercy, love, and acceptance. So many times people think Jesus is off in some faraway place and that He doesn't really concern Himself with our daily struggles, issues, and concerns. But John is telling us that Jesus is right here with us in both the simple, mundane parts of our lives and in the complex, soul-wrenching parts as well. John testifies as a witness of his

personal experiences that God became flesh and lived among men. That means Christ came here to live with us and He still lives with us. As He walked the earth alongside John, so does He walk through each and every day with us. We need to apply this truth to our lives and live as if Jesus were standing right next to us every second of the day. If we put this truth into practice, Christ will add holiness to our lives, making us more and more like Him.



# Summary of the Book of 2 John

**Author:** The Book of 2 John does not directly name its author. The tradition from the earliest days of the church states that the author was the apostle John. There have been various conjectures over the years that another disciple of Christ named John may have been responsible for this letter. However, all the evidence points to the author as John the beloved disciple who also wrote the Gospel of John.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 2 John would most likely have been written at about the same time as John's other letters, 1 and 3 John, between A.D. 85-95.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of 2 John is an urgent plea that the readers of John's letter should show their love for God and His Son, Jesus, by obeying the commandment to love each other and live their lives in obedience to the Scriptures. The Book of 2 John is also a strong warning to be on the lookout for deceivers who were going about denying [the Incarnation](#), saying that Christ had not actually come in the flesh.

## Key Verses:

[2 John 6](#): "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love."

[2 John 8-9](#): "Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of 2 John is addressed to "the chosen lady and her children." This could either have been a lady of important standing in the church or a code which refers to the local church and its congregation. In those days when Christians were being persecuted such coded salutations were often used.

The Book of 2 John is largely concerned with an urgent warning concerning deceivers who were not teaching the exact doctrine of Christ and who maintained that Jesus did not actually come in the flesh. Such a teaching denies Jesus' humanity. John is very anxious that true believers should be aware of these false teachers and have nothing to do with them.

**Connections:** John describes love not as an emotion or feeling, but as obedience to the commandments of God. Jesus reiterated the importance of the commandments, especially the “first and greatest commandment,” love for God ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#)), and the second, love for one another ([Matthew 22:37-40](#); [Leviticus 19:18](#)). Far from abolishing the Old Testament law of God, Jesus came to fulfill it by providing the means of its fulfillment in Himself.

**Practical Application:** It is extremely important that we check everything we see, hear, and read that claims to be “Christian” with the Scriptures. This cannot be too strongly emphasized because one of Satan’s greatest weapons is deceit. It is very easy to be taken in by a new and exciting doctrine that appears to be based on Scripture but which, if examined closely, is in fact a departure from the Word of God. If what appears to be happening does not line up explicitly with Scripture, then this is false and not of the Spirit, and we should have nothing to do with it.

# Summary of the Book of 3 John

**Author:** The Book of 3 John does not directly name its author. The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that the apostle John is the author. There have been occasional doubts raised by those who thought it possible that this was written by another disciple of the Lord named John, but all the evidence points to the author as John the beloved disciple who also wrote the Gospel of John.

**Date of Writing:** The Book of 3 John would most likely have been written at about the same time as John's other letters, 1 and 2 John, between A.D. 85-95.

**Purpose of Writing:** John's purpose in writing this third epistle is threefold. First, he writes to commend and encourage his beloved co-worker, [Gaius](#), in his ministry of hospitality to the itinerant messengers who were going from place to place to preach the Gospel of Christ. Second, he indirectly warns and condemns the behavior of one [Diotrephes](#), a dictatorial leader who had taken over one of the churches in the province of Asia, and whose behavior was directly opposed to all that the apostle and his Gospel stood for. Third, he commends the example of Demetrius who was reported as having a good testimony from all.

## Key Verses:

[3 John 4](#): "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."

[3 John 11](#): "Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God."

**Brief Summary:** John is writing with his usual strong emphasis on truth to this much-loved brother in Christ, Gaius, a layman of some wealth and distinction in a city near Ephesus. He highly commends Gaius' care and hospitality to his messengers whose mission was to take the Gospel from place to place, whether they were known to him or were strangers. John exhorts him to continue to do good and not to imitate evil, as in the example of Diotrephes. This man had taken over the leadership of a church in Asia and not only refused to recognize John's authority as an apostle but also refused to receive his letters and submit to his directions. He also circulated malicious slanders against John and excommunicated members who showed support and hospitality to John's messengers. Before John concludes his letter, he also commends the example of

Demetrius, of whom he has heard excellent reports.

**Connections:** The concept of offering hospitality to strangers has plenty of precedent in the Old Testament. Acts of hospitality in Israel included the humble and gracious reception of aliens into the home for food, lodging, and protection ([Genesis 18:2-8](#), [19:1-8](#); [Job 31:16-23](#), [31-32](#)). In addition, Old Testament teaching portrays the Israelites as alienated people who are dependent on God's hospitality ([Psalm 39:12](#)) and God as the One who graciously meets their needs, redeeming them from Egypt and feeding and clothing them in the wilderness ([Exodus 16](#); [Deuteronomy 8:2-5](#)).

**Practical Application:** John, as always, emphasizes the importance of walking in the truth of the Gospel. Hospitality, support and encouragement for our fellow Christians are some of the main precepts of the teachings of Jesus, and Gaius was obviously an outstanding example of this ministry. We should also show hospitality to those who minister the Word, welcoming them into our churches and homes. Those who are servants of the gospel deserve our support and encouragement.

We also need to be careful always to follow only the example of those whose words and actions are in line with the Gospel, and to be discerning enough to be aware of those such as Diotrephes whose behavior is far from being like that which Jesus taught.

# Summary of the Book of Jude

**Author:** [Jude 1](#) identifies the author of the Book of Jude as [Jude](#), a brother of James. This likely refers to Jesus' half-brother Jude, as Jesus also had a half-brother named James ([Matthew 13:55](#)). Jude likely does not identify himself as a brother of Jesus out of humility and reverence for Christ. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Jude? Who was the author of Jude?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Jude is closely related to the book of 2 Peter. The date of authorship for Jude depends on whether Jude used content from 2 Peter, or Peter used content from Jude when writing 2 Peter. The Book of Jude was written somewhere between A.D. 60 and 80.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Book of Jude is an important book for us today because it is written for the end times, for the end of the church age. The church age began at the Day of Pentecost. Jude is the only book given entirely to the great apostasy. Jude writes that evil works are the evidence of apostasy. He admonishes us to contend for the faith, for there are tares among the wheat. False prophets are in the church and the saints are in danger. Jude is a small but important book worthy of study, written for the Christian of today.

## Key Verses:

[Jude 3](#): "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

[Jude 17-19](#): "But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, 'In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.' These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit."

[Jude 24-25](#): "To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen."

**Brief Summary:** According to verse 3, Jude was anxious to write about our salvation;

however, he changed topics to address contending for the faith. This faith embodies the complete body of Christian doctrine taught by Christ, later passed on to the apostles. After Jude warns of false teachers (verses 4-16), he advises us on how we can succeed in spiritual warfare (verses 20-21). Here is wisdom we would do well to accept and adhere to as we go through these days of the end times.

**Connections:** The Book of Jude is filled with references to the Old Testament, including the Exodus (v. 5); Satan's rebellion (v. 6); Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7); Moses' death (v. 9); Cain (v. 11); Balaam (v. 11); Korah (v. 11); Enoch (vv. 14,15); and Adam (v. 14). Jude's use of the well-known historical illustrations of Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, and Korah reminded the Jewish Christians of the necessity of true faith and obedience.

**Practical Application:** We live in a unique time in history and this little book can help equip us for the untold challenges of living in the end times. Today's Christian must be on guard for false doctrines which can so easily deceive us if we are not well-versed in the Word. We need to know the Gospel—to protect and defend it—and accept the Lordship of Christ, which is evidenced by a life-change. Authentic faith always reflects Christ-like behavior. Our life in Christ should reflect our very own heart-knowledge that rests on the authority of the Almighty Creator and Father who puts faith into practice. We need that personal relationship with Him; only then will we know His voice so well that we will follow no other.

# Summary of the Book of Revelation

**Author:** [Revelation 1:1,4,9](#) and [22:8](#) specifically identify the author of the Book of Revelation as the apostle John. Full article: [Who wrote the book of Revelation? Who was the author of Revelation?](#)

**Date of Writing:** The Book of Revelation was likely written between A.D. 90 and 95.

**Purpose of Writing:** The Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John by God "to show his servants what must soon take place." This book is filled with mysteries about things to come. It is the final warning that the world will surely end and judgment will be certain. It gives us a tiny glimpse of heaven and all of the glories awaiting those who keep their robes white. Revelation takes us through the [great tribulation](#) with all its woes and the final fire that all unbelievers will face for eternity. The book reiterates the fall of Satan and the doom he and his angels are bound for. We are shown the duties of all creatures and angels of heaven and the promises of the saints that will live forever with Jesus in the New Jerusalem. Like John, we find it hard to describe what we read in the book of Revelation.

## Key Verses:

[Revelation 1:19](#), "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later."

[Revelation 13:16-17](#), "He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name."

[Revelation 19:11](#), "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war."

[Revelation 20:11](#), "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them."

[Revelation 21:1](#), "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."

**Brief Summary:** The Revelation is lavish in colorful descriptions of the visions which proclaim for us the last days before Christ's return and the ushering in of the new heaven and new earth. The Revelation begins with letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor, then goes on to reveal the series of devastations poured out upon the earth; the mark of the beast, "666"; the climactic battle of Armageddon; the binding of Satan; the reign of the Lord; the Great White Throne Judgment; and the nature of the eternal city of God. Prophecies concerning Jesus Christ are fulfilled and a concluding call to His Lordship assures us that He will soon return.

**Connections:** The Book of Revelation is the culmination of the prophecies about the [end times](#), beginning with the Old Testament. The description of the antichrist mentioned in [Daniel 9:27](#) is developed fully in chapter 13 of Revelation. Outside of Revelation, examples of apocalyptic literature in the Bible are Daniel chapters 7-12, Isaiah chapters 24-27, Ezekiel chapters 37-41, and Zechariah chapters 9-14. All these prophecies come together in the Book of Revelation.

**Practical Application:** Have you accepted Christ as your Savior? If so, you have nothing to fear from God's judgment of the world as described in the Book of Revelation. The Judge is on our side. Before the final judgment begins, we must witness to friends and neighbors about God's offer of eternal life in Christ. The events in this book are real. We must live our lives in a way that demonstrates the truth of what we know so that others will notice our joy about our future and want to join us in that new and glorious city.



# Why is it important to study the various characters in the Bible?

The Bible is filled with characters, literally and figuratively. Perhaps the best way to describe how the Bible portrays its characters is “human” because they are, in fact, human. The Bible is true, and the people that inhabit its pages were real people with real lives, real relationships, real joys, and real problems, just like us. The Bible does not shy away from presenting both the strengths and weaknesses of those it portrays. This makes the characters in the Bible “practical” in the sense that we can relate to them and educational in the sense that we can learn from their successes and failures.

Studying the people in the Bible is not merely about knowing historical fact. In their stories we learn about who God is, we recognize human tendencies, and we learn by example, both through positive examples and cautionary tales. Even in society today we recognize the power of story in learning about the lives of our contemporaries and our forebears. Since “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#)), paying attention to the people in the Bible is beneficial.

For example, from [Adam and Eve](#) we see the dangers of questioning what God has said and doubting His goodness. We see the tendency to shift blame rather than admit our own sin. We also see how to have joy in God’s forgiveness and promise of restoration. In Adam and Eve’s story, we see how God invites people into relationship and how He is merciful.

The [patriarchs](#) also provide valuable examples for us. Abraham demonstrates the value of faith. We also see his failures when he lies and the consequences of trying to force God’s plans rather than wait on Him. In Jacob we see that God is faithful to keep His promises, even to those who scheme. We see how our sinful tendencies can turn on us and cause us pain. We are warned against favoritism and see its broad-reaching effects.

In [Moses’](#) story we see that we can sometimes misunderstand God’s timing or His ways and try to take on a righteous mission on our own, which doesn’t turn out well. We see how God prepares us for what He calls us to. We also see God’s patience with our fears and doubts. We come to understand the importance of following God completely and remembering that He is holy.

From [Rahab](#) and [Ruth](#), we see that God invites all kinds of people into His plan, not just those of Jewish descent. We see that He is faithful to those who follow Him.

The [kings of Israel](#) have many lessons to teach us. In Saul we see the importance of obedience and humility. In David we see God's forgiveness. We learn that even when we sin terribly, we can turn to God and receive mercy. We come to understand the importance of calling out to God in any and every situation. We see complicated family relationships and warnings about attending to our families. In Solomon we see the value of wisdom as well as the foolishness of not applying it. We are warned of the dangers of others drawing our hearts away from God. In Ahab we see how corrupt leadership can affect a whole nation. In Hezekiah we see the wonderful results of faith in God even in seemingly impossible situations.

In [Elijah](#), we see that we can sometimes feel alone. We see fear and depression. We also see God's provision and His faithfulness. In other prophets we see that serving God often means being different or rejected. We see their deep experiences of pain that God used to give them compassion toward those He told them to warn. In this, we recognize that God has a heart of compassion, and we see His patience, His graciousness, His justice, and His holiness. We see the value of obedience and the importance of God's Word.

The New Testament is likewise full of characters we can learn from. In [Peter](#) we see impulsiveness as well as bold leadership. [Mary of Bethany](#) shows us the value of sitting at Jesus' feet and that Jesus is eminently worthy of our worship. Paul's life demonstrates the transformational power of God. We see how zealously following the Lord can lead to all sorts of reactions from others, practical hardships, consistent provision, and indescribable joys. [Lois and Eunice](#) demonstrate the value of training children and nurturing them in the Lord.

The list goes on. No matter your personality and struggles, there is someone in the Bible you can relate to and learn from.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). Ultimately, that must be our goal when we study Bible characters. Where they were successful in following God, we are to emulate them. Where they failed, we are to avoid making the same mistakes. "Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. . . . These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us. . . . No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will

not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" ([1 Corinthians 10:6-13](#)).

# Is the Bible Truly God's Word?

Our answer to this question will not only determine how we view [the Bible](#) and its importance to our lives, but it will also have an eternal impact on us. If the Bible is truly God's Word, then we should cherish it, study it, obey it, and fully trust it. If the Bible is truly the Word of God, then it is the final authority for all matters of faith, practice, and morality. If the Bible is the Word of God, then to dismiss it is to dismiss God Himself.

The fact that God gave us the Bible is an evidence of His love for us. God communicated to mankind what He is like and how we can have a right relationship with Him. These are things that we could not have known had God not divinely revealed them to us in the Bible. The Bible contains everything mankind needs to know about God in order to have a right relationship with Him.

How can we know that the Bible is the Word of God and not just a good book? What is [unique](#) about the Bible that sets it apart from all other books ever written? Is there any evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word? These types of questions must be seriously examined. There can be no doubt that the Bible does claim to be the Word of God. This is seen in Paul's commendation to Timothy: "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](#)).

There are both internal and external evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word.

## **Internal Evidence that the Bible is God's Word**

Internal evidences are those things within the Bible that testify of its divine origin. One internal evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is its unity. Even though it is really sixty-six individual books, written on three continents, in three different languages, over a period of approximately 1,500 years, by more than 40 authors who came from many walks of life, the Bible remains one unified book from beginning to end without contradiction. This unity is unique from all other books and is evidence of the divine origin of the words that God moved men to record.

Another internal evidence that indicates the Bible is truly God's Word is [prophecy](#). The Bible contains hundreds of detailed prophecies relating to the future of various nations, certain cities, and all mankind. Other prophecies concern the coming of the Messiah, the

Savior of all who would believe in Him. Unlike the prophecies found in other religious books or those by men such as [Nostradamus](#), biblical prophecies are extremely detailed. There are over three hundred [prophecies concerning Jesus Christ](#) in the Old Testament. Not only was His lineage foretold and where He would be born, but also how He would die and that He would rise again. There simply is no logical way to explain the fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than citing divine origin. There is no other religious book with the amount of detailed predictive prophecy the Bible contains.

A third internal evidence of the divine origin of the Bible is its unique authority and power. While this evidence is more subjective than the first two, it is no less a powerful testimony that the Bible is God's Word. The Bible's authority is unlike that of any other book ever written. This power is seen in the way countless lives have been supernaturally transformed. Drug addicts have been cured by it, homosexuals set free by it, derelicts and deadbeats transformed by it, hardened criminals reformed by it, sinners rebuked by it, and hate turned to love by it. The Bible does possess a dynamic and transforming power that is only possible because it is truly God's Word.

### **External Evidence that the Bible is God's Word**

There are also external evidences that indicate the Bible is truly the Word of God. One is the historicity of the Bible. Because the Bible details historical events, its accuracy is subject to verification like any other historical document. Through [archaeological evidence](#) and extrabiblical writings, the historical accounts of the Bible proved time and again to be accurate and true. In fact, all the archaeological and manuscript evidence supporting the Bible makes it the best-documented book from the ancient world. That the Bible accurately records historically verifiable events helps substantiate its claim to be the very Word of God and supports trust concerning other matters the Bible addresses.

Another external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the integrity of its human authors. In studying the lives of the authors of Scripture, we find them to be honest and sincere. The fact that they were willing to die often excruciating deaths for what they believed testifies that these men truly believed God had spoken to them. The men who wrote the New Testament and many hundreds of other believers ([1 Corinthians 15:6](#)) knew the truth of their message because they had spent time with Jesus Christ after He had risen from the dead. Seeing the risen Christ had a tremendous impact on them. They went from hiding in fear to being willing to die for the message God had revealed to them. Their lives and deaths testify to the fact that the Bible truly is God's Word.

Another external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the indestructibility of the

Bible. The Bible has suffered more vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it than any other book in history. From early Roman Emperors like Diocletian, through communist dictators and on to modern-day atheists, the Bible has withstood a constant onslaught from detractors. Yet it endures and is still today the most widely published book in the world.

Throughout history, skeptics have regarded the Bible as mythological, but archaeology has confirmed it as historical. Opponents have attacked its teaching as primitive and outdated, but its moral and legal concepts have had a positive influence on societies throughout the world. It continues to be attacked by pseudo-science, psychology, and political movements, yet it remains just as true and relevant today as it was when it was first written. This should not surprise us. After all, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" ([Mark 13:31](#)).

The Bible, unique among books, has transformed countless lives and swayed whole cultures. After looking at the evidence, one can say without a doubt that God has spoken and that, yes, the Bible is truly God's Word.