

# ***OVERVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE***

***APPENDIX TO  
"What Is The Bible?"***

## - OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY -

### PENTATEUCH

The first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, were written by Moses. They record the beginning of the universe, our world, man, sin, the first murder, the first false religion, the first flood, the first rainbow, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the establishment of Israel, the Exodus from Egypt through the Red Sea, the Ten Commandments, wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, directions for building the tabernacle, guidelines for the sacrifices, numerous ordinances for worship, societal order of conduct, and warnings relative to holiness. But best of all we get our first glimpses of God and we discover that He loves holiness and hates sin. These books also speak of historic people such as Adam, Eve, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and Joshua.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Genesis	The Beginning	Creation of the universe, the origin of man and sin, the curse on the earth due to sin, the promise of the Savior, the creation of false religion, the flood and the Patriarchs.
Exodus	God's Deliverance	Moses, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, Israel's desert wanderings, the establishment of the law and the tabernacle, sacrifices and directions for worship.
Leviticus	Holiness and Worship	Laws about the priesthood, sacrifices, priestly holiness and worship given.
Numbers	Disobedience and discipline	More laws concerning worship, Israel's complaining and lack of faith, God's discipline of Israel in the wilderness.
Deuteronomy	Remembrance and Reward	Israel reminded of God's love and favor, laws repeated, warning and exhortations in preparation for entering the promised land; Palestine and the death of Moses.

### ISRAEL'S HISTORY

The historical books of the Bible cover the period after Moses' death until about 400 years before Christ's birth. After Moses died, Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land. God had directed Israel to defeat all of the nations in the promised land so that they would not be polluted by the sin of the peoples in the region, but they failed. After Joshua's death, Israel was guided by a series of judges during a period of moral bankruptcy. Eventually, the Israelites asked for a king, which God granted to them. God gave them the desire of their hearts. The Israelites had made a bad decision. What followed was a series of a few good but mostly evil kings who reigned over Israel.

The first king, Saul, did not remain true to God and sinned. Therefore God replaced him with King David. God was and still is looking for godly leaders who love Him and respond accordingly. David was God's man. Scripture says that David

was a man after God's own heart, yet he sinned by committing adultery and giving birth to a son named Solomon. After David died, his son Solomon became king. Solomon was blessed by God with wisdom and riches. He built the first temple and enjoyed great fame. In the late years of Solomon's life, he followed after other gods due to the influence of his many unbelieving wives. Consequently, God divided the people into a northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdom. After that, most of the kings were wicked and did not follow God. As a result, both Israel and Judah were eventually deported and held captive in Babylon as punishment for their waywardness. After 70 years, a portion of the Jews returned to the promised land.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Joshua	Promised land entered	Israel enters, conquers and divides the promised land - Palestine.
Judges	Israel lives and wars with the Canaanites	Israel lives through cycles of bondage and deliverance from the Canaanites; God appoints judges such as Gideon and Samson.
Ruth	Kinsman redeemer (Picture of Christ)	Ruth and Naomi leave Moab for Israel: Ruth works as a gleaner and is redeemed by Boaz.
1 Samuel 2 Samuel	God rejected in favor of a human king	The life of Samuel is in view (the last judge). Saul is appointed Israel's first king and David is appointed king - Saul's successor. Life of David as king.
1 Kings 2 Kings	United kingdom divided - political view	Life of Solomon, Israel is divided and brief histories of the numerous kings are presented. Israel's history is given from a political perspective.
1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles	United kingdom divided - priestly view	Israel's history is repeated from the priestly perspective. Emphasis is given to Judah and the nation's deportation to Babylon.
Ezra	Israel released from captivity returns to promised land.	Israel returns to Palestine after 70 years of exile, with emphasis on the spiritual and moral restoration of Jerusalem.
Nehemiah	Israel returns to build the temple and Jerusalem	Nehemiah obtains permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This is a fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9:25-27.
Esther	God's providence and protection	God focuses on a very special woman whom He uses to save her people. Esther is used by God to stop Haman's plot to destroy the Jews.

### POETRY

The books of poetry are God's wisdom literature. The book of Job is probably the oldest book in the Bible. It is about a man who had trials and difficulties even though he did no wrong (Job 1:1,8; 2:3). The book reveals how God and the demons interact. It helps us to understand that God cares more about our spiritual growth than our comfort. The books of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon were written primarily by King David and Solomon. These books were written in approximately the tenth century B.C. Psalms is a book of worship. Many songs have been written using the words

from various Psalms. Song of Solomon is very unusual because it describes the love and beauty of a couple courting and their eventual marriage. The book is actually very explicit. It demonstrates that God cares about marriage and the physical aspects of that relationship.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Job	The righteous are purified by trials	God permits trials to purify Job. Three of his four friends give bad counsel to Job. Elihu gives sound advice. God restores Job's material wealth.
Psalms	Worship	The book is divided into five sections each of which is written by a variety of authors. The book covers a wide range of praise, confession and adoration to God.
Proverbs	Godly wisdom	This book is about practical wisdom. It provides counsel and guidance for righteous living.
Ecclesiastes	Life without God is empty	This is the result of Solomon's quest for meaning in life during a period of his life when he was away from God. His conclusion is that life is empty apart from God.
Song of Solomon	Godly marriage	This song describes the courtship of a couple and their eventual marriage. The book is wonderful for illustrating New Testament marital truth.

### MAJOR PROPHETS

The books of the major prophets were generally written between 740 - 536 B.C. The prophets spoke to Israel on behalf of God and warned them to repent of their sins or else see Israel fall. God was and is not finished with Israel, and so these last books also describe Israel's return to Palestine, Jesus' first coming, and future times.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Isaiah	Salvation is of the Lord	Israel warned of judgment, given a promise of salvation and the coming of Messiah.
Jeremiah	God is patient but holy	Israel warned to repent before judgment comes, deportation to Babylon and restoration of Israel.
Lamentations	Mourning judgement	Mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem
Ezekiel	Judgment and restoration	Decline and fall of Judah and eventual restoration of Israel.
Daniel	Sovereignty of God	Panorama of world history from Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome to the future kingdom.

## MINOR PROPHETS

The books of the minor prophets were written between 840 - 430 B.C. Details about the lives of some of these prophets are unknown. Their messages range from warnings to Israel, other nations, predictions about Messiah and the future of Israel. The Old Testament ends with the promise that a messenger will come before the Messiah - Jesus the Christ - arrives. In the final verses of Malachi, we are told that Elijah the prophet will come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Then there was silence for 400 years and then Jesus arrived. The New Testament continues the history of the promised One - the Messiah who is Jesus the Christ.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Hosea	God is faithful	The prophet Hosea marries a prostitute, Gomer, as an illustration of God's love for faithless, idolatrous Israel.
Joel	Judah's judgment is coming	Judah is warned that she awaits judgment unless she repents. The Day of the Lord is described.
Amos	Israel's judgment is coming	Israel awaits destruction unless she repents.
Obadiah	Edom to be destroyed	The nation of Edom is to be destroyed since she rejoiced over Judah's destruction. What a lesson for us.
Jonah	Gentiles to be included in salvation	The prophet of God attempts to be disobedient by running from God. God goes after him and the prophet eventually submits to God.
Micah	Destruction of Israel and Judah predicted	Destruction is coming since Judah ignored God. Despite religious idolatry and hypocrisy, God will keep His promises.
Nahum	Nineveh doomed	Nineveh to be destroyed because 125 years later their children have rejected Jonah's warning.
Habakkuk	Our holiness is utmost to God	How can Judah be destroyed by those who are more wicked? The just shall live by faith.
Zephaniah	Day of the Lord	The Day of the Lord is described as an awesome day of destruction for all nations.
Haggai	Rebuild My temple	The Jews are rebuked for not completing the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. They are urged to finish.
Zechariah	Messiah is coming	The Jews are encouraged to complete the rebuilding of the temple. The promise of Messiah is repeated.
Malachi	Ritualism rebuked	The nation is rebuked for their lack of love for God and their coldhearted indifference to Him.

## - NEW TESTAMENT -

### GOSPELS - LIFE OF CHRIST

The New Testament is composed of twenty-seven books. It starts with four gospels which describe the life of Jesus. It reveals the fact that Jesus did miracles, taught divine principles, healed many, and was in fact God. The gospels include Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each book emphasizes various aspects of Jesus' life. They are written by the Holy Spirit and three apostles with Luke being written by a medical doctor who was a friend of Paul the apostle. These books are filled with the miracles and the teachings of Christ. He is the focus and center of each book. The books reveal that God greatly loves us, and wants to forgive our sins, and as a result Jesus Christ finally died for our sins in order to accomplish that goal. Jesus then returned to life three days later and ascended back into heaven. He is back home and will return some day.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Matthew	Jesus is Messiah	This gospel presents Jesus as Messiah, the king, the fulfillment of prophecy. This gospel emphasizes Jesus' sermons and prophecy.
Mark	Jesus as Servant	This gospel presents Jesus as the servant-savior, the bond-slave who is greatest of them all. Great emphasis is given to the final week of Jesus' life.
Luke	Jesus as Man	Luke gives us the chronological history of Jesus' life.
John	Jesus is God	A series of seven key signs reveal that Jesus is God. Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

### EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

There is only one book in the New Testament that is truly historical in nature. It picks up the events that occurred after Christ's return to heaven. The book describes the start of the spiritual church, the establishment of the first local church, and the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman world. It reveals God's desire that both Gentiles and Jews be saved from their sins and enter into "The Life." He wants them to become Christians.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Acts	Jesus's church will accomplish His purposes	Christ's ascension is described and the chronology of the expansion of the church is given. The church is in transition. Peter is the apostle to the Jews and Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles.

## PAULINE EPISTLES

The next section of books were written by the apostle Paul. These books are mainly doctrinal. They explain salvation, the church, the future and how to live the Christian life. Warnings about false teachers and false teaching are a major theme. Many of the books address the sin of believers.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Romans	Doctrine of salvation	This book gives us a wonderful understanding about salvation and what it means that Jesus is our savior.
1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians	Epistles of correction	These books are warnings not to sin in a number of areas: divisions, incest, lawsuits, sexual abstinence in marriage, divorce, order in the church and giving.
Galatians	Grace is better than legalism	We are warned about false teaching and false teachers. The Holy Spirit explains the purpose of the law, the superiority of grace, liberty over legalism and how to walk by the Spirit.
Ephesians	The Church	The believer's relationship to Jesus and how the church is to function is described.
Philippians	Be like Jesus	This is a challenge to Christians to think, behave and have the attitude of Christ.
Colossians	Christ is preeminent	The preeminence of Christ is presented. All believers are challenged to submit to Jesus.
1 Thessalonians	Personal holiness	Encouragement to live a holy life and to experience spiritual growth and the second coming of Christ are the major themes.
2 Thessalonians	Second Coming of Jesus	The purpose of persecution, the second coming of Christ and personal responsibility are discussed.
1 Timothy	Guidelines for the church	Leadership guidelines, order in the church, doctrine and miscellaneous duties are presented.
2 Timothy	Be faithful	Timothy is encouraged to be bold, endure hardships in the ministry, to watch out for false teachers and false teaching, and to teach the Word.
Titus	Sound doctrine	Leadership qualifications are given along with guidelines for ministry responsibilities to various groups.
Philemon	Love forgives	A slave is encouraged to return to his master and serve him as he would Jesus Christ.

## GENERA EPISTLES

The general epistles are addressed to all believers everywhere. These books were written by the apostles Peter and John, Jesus' brother James and Jude. The writer of Hebrews is unknown. These books deal with true faith and false teachers. The first book deals with practical Christian living. The last books are concerned with evidences of true faith and false teachers. The epistles of Peter deal with suffering.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Hebrews	Superiority of Jesus	This epistle presents Jesus our eternal, holy, High Priest who is better than everything. The Old and New Covenant are discussed.
James	Practical living	Tests of true faith are presented. One who has true faith continues in the faith and produces good works. A variety of topics are discussed.
1 Peter	The righteous will suffer	The challenge to be holy even as God is holy is given. Submission to government, husbands, and parents and of employees to employers is taught. The role of elders is presented. Christ is our example.
2 Peter	False teachers are condemned	Warnings about false teachers and advice about the end times is provided.
1 John	Evidences of true faith	The basis for true fellowship is Christ. The evidences of true faith are given.
2 John	Walk in love	The Holy Spirit encourages believers to adhere to sound teaching and to fervent love for one another.
3 John	True fellowship	Believers are encouraged to support traveling evangelists and to reject false teachers.
Jude	False teachers exposed	The behavior of false teachers and their patterns of life are described.

## PROPHECY

The last book is about the future. It is a literal book with many symbols which have explanations from the Old Testament. A careful study reveals that many of the symbols are identical to symbols found in Daniel.

BOOK	KEY THOUGHT	CONTENT
Revelation	End Times	A panorama of Daniel's 70th week is greatly expanded to include the tribulation period, the kingdom, Armageddon, the judgement of Satan and demons, the Great White Throne Judgement, the New Heaven.