

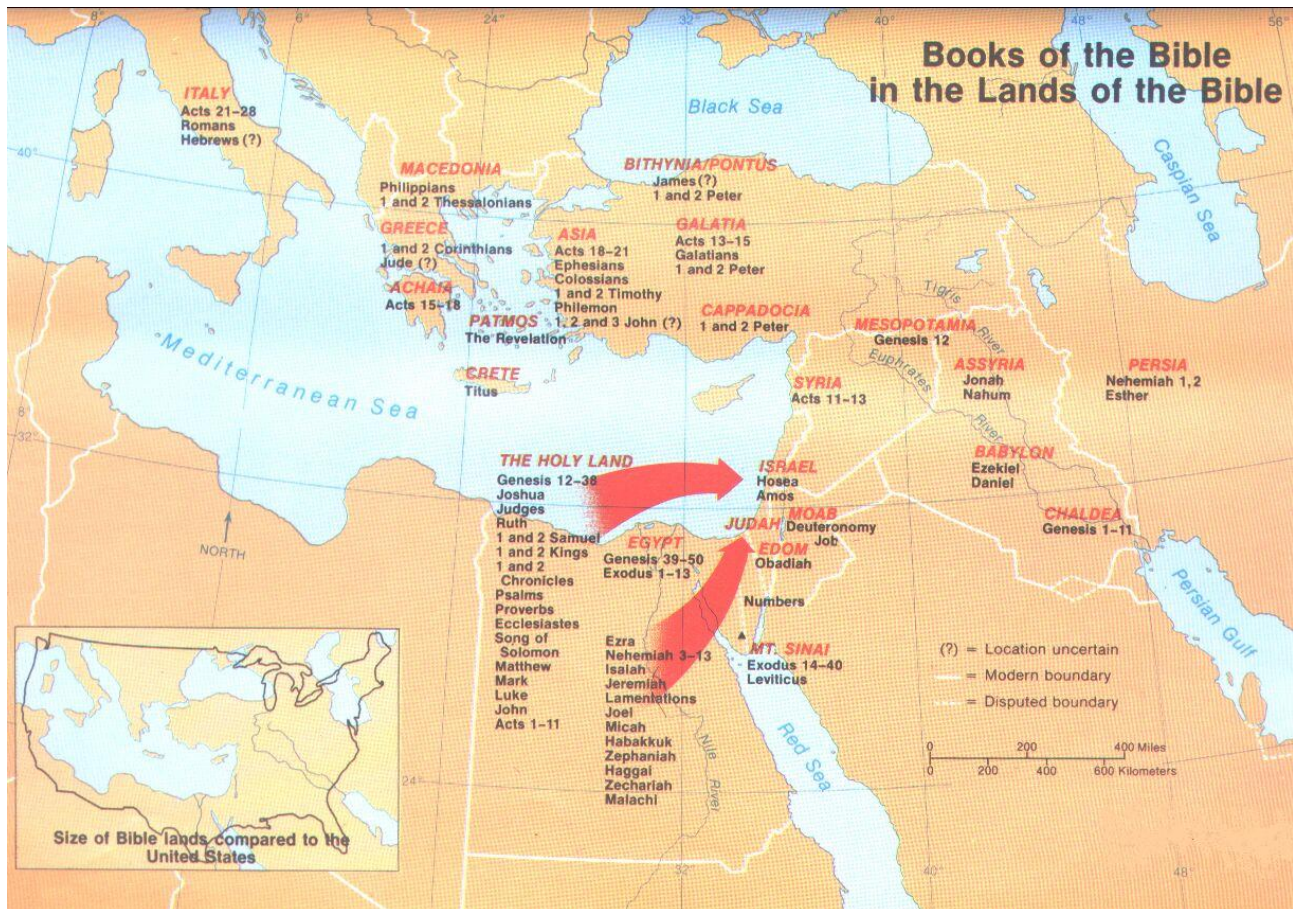
Bible Walk: Pastor Raymond Woodward

The Old Testament is the foundation for the New; Jesus could not fulfill prophecy that was not recorded.

There are four main sections in the Old Testament:

- Torah/Pentateuch (“pente” means “five”)
 - The laws written here allowed the Jews to have a relationship with God.
- History (12 books)
- Poetry (5 books)
- Prophecy (17 books)
 - The 5 major prophets are called such because they are longer
 - The 12 minor prophets have shorter books

The sections of the Old Testament are grouped by theme; they are not chronological. However, the first 17 books are in “order.” Genesis-Esther tells the story of the Hebrew people.



Source: <http://www.biblesnet.com/maps3/Biblical%20lands%20of%20the%20Bible.jpg>

Genesis: The Book of Beginning

All “firsts” are in Genesis.

When man fell, we didn’t just lose a location; we were forever distanced from God by sin - body, mind and spirit.

- Our *body* began to decay.
- Our *mind* became subject to evil and wickedness; now we were responsible for right and wrong.
- Our *spirit* now contained a gap or void that could be filled with nothing but God’s Spirit. Men are not filled again by God’s Spirit until Acts 2.

Genesis 3:15: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

- This is the first messianic prophecy of the Bible. The war between God & His people and the Devil starts in Genesis.
- In this verse, we see that while the Devil delivers a wound (bruise His heel), Jesus delivers a fatal injury (bruise thy head) to the Devil and ultimately defeats him.

In Genesis there are two major sections:

1. Primitive History (4 Events): Creation, Fall, Flood, Babel
2. History of the Patriarchs (4 People): Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
 - This is God reaching into mankind and, through individuals, blessing the earth.

Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations
Chapters 1 & 2	Chapters 3-5	Chapters 6-9	Chapters 10-11

Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph
Chapters 12-25	Chapters 26-27	Chapters 28-36	Chapters 37-50

A lesson we can learn from Genesis: Adam had the *perfect* environment to serve God in, and he messed up. Abraham came out of a *pagan* nation with idol worship and the like, and he appreciated God’s hand in his life and served Him. You don’t have to have the ideal “conditions” to serve God. You just have to “want to.”

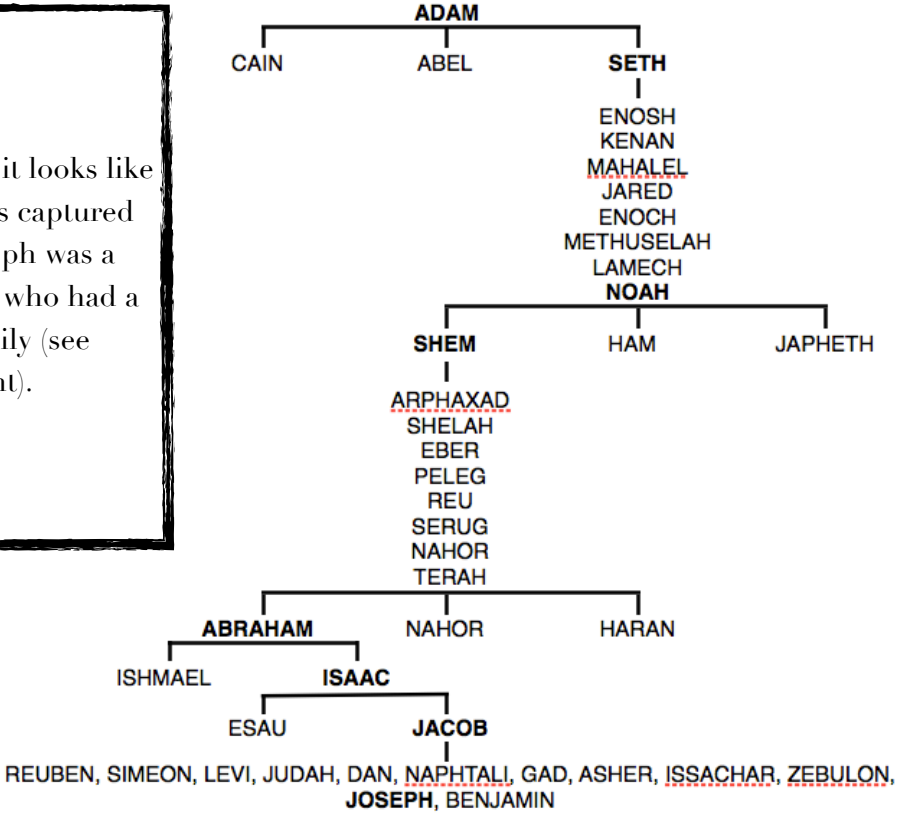
Genesis 12:3: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

- This is God’s promise to the children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham.
- The Old Testament foreshadows the New Testament; the church is an image of Abraham (called out of darkness into marvelous light).



Source: <http://www.preceptaustin.org/map%20of%20abrahams%20journey.gif>

During the life of Joseph, it looks like the promise is over (he is captured and enslaved), but Joseph was a descendant of Abraham, who had a promise over his family (see genealogy at right).



Genesis 50:20: But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

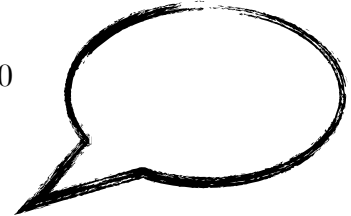
- As in the day of Joseph, when the church is being marginalized by society, that's just God's way of working things in our favor. God pulled Joseph up and out of slavery and saved his whole family. In the middle of failure, God can deliver and do a great thing.

Exodus: The Book of Redemption by Blood of God's Chosen

Because of the famine, the people move to Egypt to live, *guests* of Joseph. They later become slaves for 430 years when a new Pharaoh rises up and forgets the life of Joseph.

The people are oppressed and it looks “bad” all over again. But God is in control and will turn a *family* into a *nation*, using Egypt all the while.

Some scholars believe the people lived in *prosperity* (Exodus 1:7) for 150 years, and *persecution* (Exodus 1:8-6:30) for 280 years. The Exodus, they believe, happened around 1446 BC (430 years after they came to Egypt).



Exodus 2:23-24: And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

God chooses a man again (Moses) and through the ten plagues, obliterates the Egyptians’ trust in their gods (the final god being Osiris, the giver of life; when God kills the firstborn, this god is proven powerless).

Below is a table with the plagues and *examples* of the defeated Egyptian gods. The Egyptians worshipped over 100 gods, so each time God struck, He proved *many* of them powerless.

Plague 1	Plague 2	Plague 3	Plague 4	Plague 5	Plague 6	Plague 7	Plague 8	Plague 9	Plague 10
Nile turned to blood	Frogs	Gnats	Flies	Death of Cattle	Boils	Hail	Locusts	Darkness	Death of Firstborn
Khnum, Osiris Guardian of Nile, Giver of Life	Heqt Fertility goddess (pictured as a frog)	Geb, Seth Earth gods	Horus, Nut Sky god	Apis Sacred Bull	Khonsu & Isis Healing gods (& Egyptian healers)	Nut Sky god	Seth God of cultivated plain, agriculture Shamans	Amun-Re and other Sun gods	Osiris Giver of Life

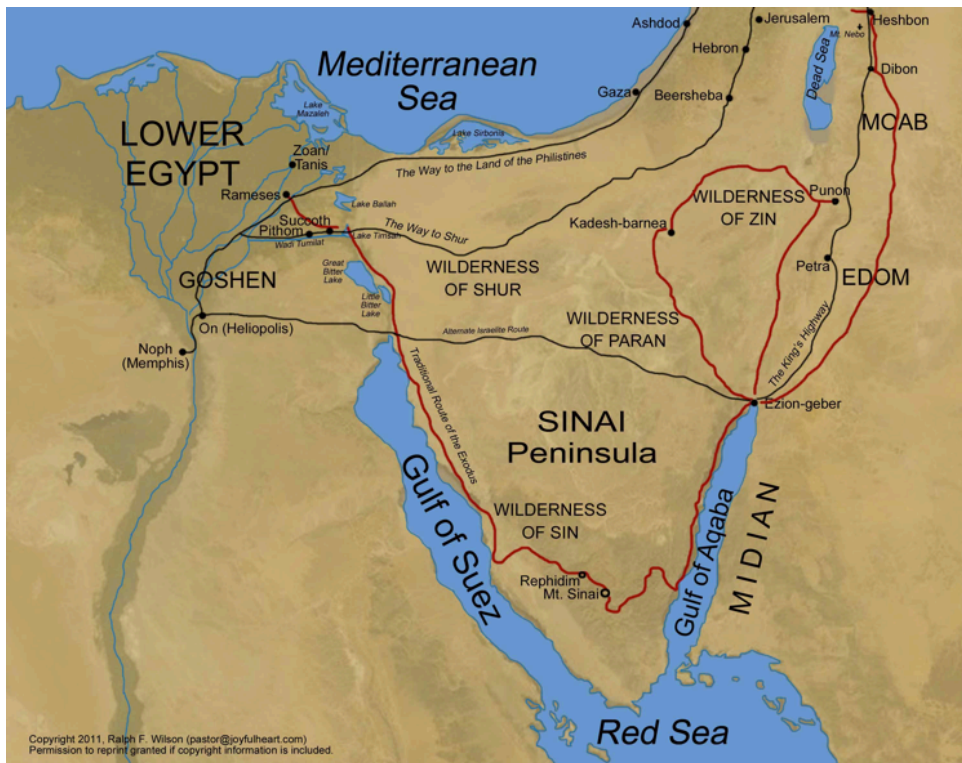
Exodus 12:13: And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

- Salvation is all about the blood; the Passover and blood shed for the salvation of the people is a picture of Jesus (Adam & Eve were also “covered” by the death of animals when they used skins).

After they leave Egypt, Pharaoh wants them to return and goes after them when they flee. But the children of God have:

1. BLOOD
2. A path through water when they cross the Red Sea (BAPTISM), which Pharaoh (the Devil) can't get through.
3. Pillar of Cloud and FIRE (HOLY GHOST), which leads them through the wilderness for the rest of their journey.
 - a. NOTE: This is the reason the first outpouring of the Holy Ghost also had *fire* (not only tongues)...God was pointing backwards to the Old Testament and reminding the people of the shadow in Exodus.

Exodus is the book about the WAY OUT. Salvation has always come through BLOOD, WATER and SPIRIT. Always has...always will. Exodus points to our need for a sacrifice.



Dr. Ralph F. Wilson Images: Appendix 2. The Route Of The Exodus. Moses Bible Study
 Source: http://www.jesuswalk.com/moses/appendix_2-route-of-the-exodus.htm

The people, once free, grumble and complain and reject salvation, wishing for the days of Egypt.

Exodus ends with God giving them the law and the plan for the Tabernacle where sin can be atoned for.

First, God gave them MORAL law (the 10 Commandments). Moral law never changes.

Then He gave them CEREMONIAL laws (what to do in the Tabernacle, etc.), which were used to atone for those who broke the moral law of God. Ceremonial is secondary, which is why Jesus later condemns the Pharisees; they kept the ceremonial laws but not the moral law!

Leviticus: God Tells His Children How to be Separated and Holy

After years of slavery, the Israelites concept of God has been distorted by the Egyptians (who were polytheistic). In Leviticus, we find God “laying down the law” because He loves His children; the purpose of Leviticus is to guide the people in staying away from a tendency to sin.

Leviticus puts such an emphasis on being HOLY. This is God SEPARATING His people from the world around them. God knows it’s more important for us to “fit” in His presence than *their* presence! The same is still true!

Leviticus is ultimately a book of worship!

The word “HOLY” is mentioned 87 times. The word “ATONEMENT”: 45 times. Leviticus is a BLOOD-SOAKED book.

Leviticus shows us that after you are saved, you must live HOLY to be close to God. There are 5 offerings talked about in Leviticus that tell the people how to GET right. There are also 8 feasts that tell the people how to STAY right.

Leviticus 1:3: If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

- No one will keep you saved; you must choose to do this yourself. It is *work* to live for God, PUBLIC work. Get yourself to the house of God. And do it OVER and OVER and OVER and OVER again. This is the whole point of Leviticus; only a holy people can worship a holy God.
- In the New Testament, our sacrifices are *ourselves*, our holy lifestyle, prayer, worship, praise. We bring this to God instead of turtledoves, etc.



Model of Tabernacle, as seen in Israel (Timna Park).

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stiftshuette_Modell_Timnapark.jpg

Leviticus 25:10: And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

- God also made provision for those who “mess up.” It doesn’t matter how bad. God instituted a year of JUBILEE, which allowed the people to regroup and live for God better than ever.

Numbers: Warfare! And The Wandering of God's People

After getting the people all set up, God says, "Now you have it all. You are ready; take your land!" The people say "we can't!" and God lets them WANDER. Sometimes we do the same, wasting time because of our insecurities.

The book is called Numbers because twice the people are counted (a census is taken in chapter 1 and chapter 26).

In Numbers, they are wandering in the wilderness. Instead of marching in to take the land God promised them, they decided to go spy instead. They went with the (negative, pessimistic) opinion of the 10 spies instead of the optimistic opinion of Caleb and Joshua.

Numbers teaches us lessons about spiritual warfare. The people had some victories, even in the wilderness, even when those around them were not living for God and were murmuring.

Remember, you didn't sign up to serve God to make your life *easier*. You signed up to live for God to make your life *eternal*.

In Numbers, there's a generation that serves God, and one that doesn't. In chapter 14:30, we see "save Caleb and Joshua." These two men were of the "older" generation, but they did not murmur and complain like their peers. God said they would see the Promised Land because they trusted in God to give them the victory.

Numbers 14:34: After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

- God said, "you'll wander for 40 years." He let them wander this long so all the murmurers would be gone and only the others would enter the Promised Land. In other words, the murmurers held up the process for everyone else!

There are two tracks in Numbers...the track of OBEDIENCE and the track of REBELLION. Both run parallel, all the way through the book. Romans 11:22 says God is both "good" and "severe." It's the same today. Those who obey God experience His goodness. Those who mess around and rebel experience His severity.

Deuteronomy: The Laws of Separated Lifestyle Are Given to a New Generation

Deuteronomy means “the second law.” It’s called the *second* law not because it was different from the law Moses first received, but because it was given to a new generation.

For 40 days, Moses preached the law to this second generation. This generation was NOT there when the Red Sea had parted. They had NOT been at Sinai. Moses tells the people “Be careful and recognize what you have before you. Don’t disregard holiness.” Our church is here today!

Deuteronomy is what Jesus quotes more than any other book in the OT; it is a book about lifestyle.

Deuteronomy 4:2: Don’t add or take away from this word from God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7: Hear O Israel...the Lord our God is one Lord.

Deuteronomy 32:45-47: **For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life:** and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

- Holiness, separated living is not a vain thing for us; it is our life, who we are.
- “More than Israel kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept Israel.” Likewise, more than we keep the laws of God, the laws of God keep us.

God commands the Israelites to remember these four things about Himself: faithfulness, holiness, blessings, warnings.

Deuteronomy 30:19: I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

- Living God’s word gives life. The book of Deuteronomy is a book of separation.
 - There were CEREMONIAL separation laws (don’t mix these cloths, these animals, etc.)
 - Then there were MORAL separation laws (when you see the word “abomination,” this is a moral law, which will remain for all of time).

Some people think the Old Testament is “not for us,” but if you’re going to throw out Deuteronomy (or parts thereof), you will have to throw out this verse in Hebrews that says “yesterday, today and forever” God will remain the same. He never changes, nor does His Word.

Some say “In the Old Testament, they had law, but we’re under the NEW Testament (so we can do whatever we want, ask God to forgive us, and we’re good!). No way! In the New Testament, we’re under the Law of Grace, also called the “Law of Liberty.” In other words, we don’t live for God and sacrifice because we have to (Old Testament); we do this because we want to.

Joshua: Conquering the Promised Land

The book of Joshua details the military campaigns of Joshua, who wages war on the inhabitants of Canaan and takes the Promised Land. They conquered and then divided the land among the tribes. This book also begins the books of “History.”

The Promised Land is NOT a type of heaven (even though many old songs are written this way). There were idols in the Promised Land, battles to fight, walls to get over. What the Promised Land DOES symbolize is the future God has for His children. God has a great “Promised Land” for His children, but He shows us that we will have to fight for it.

In Joshua 1:6, we see that the land was promised to the *fathers*, but the *children* took it.

Joshua 1:9: Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Wherever we go in God’s will, God goes with us.

Joshua’s leadership is different from Moses’. Moses mentored Joshua (a lesson of the book: mentoring) but Joshua sends a team (the priests) to cross the Jordan. Moses raised his rod over the Red Sea alone. Joshua believed in team ministry.

Joshua 24:14-15: Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

- During his “farewell” speech before entering the Promised Land, Joshua says “do what you want...but if no one goes into the Promised Land with me, I will serve the Lord.”



Source: <http://www.preceptaustin.org/map%20of%20tribes%20of%20israel.gif>

- He said “When your feelings betray you, make a choice.”
- “If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord,” choose to serve the Lord anyway! Even when it doesn’t feel right or easy. Mature love and commitment stays when feelings wane. There will be times, Joshua said, when feelings for God wane. But then...choose!

“The greatest detriment to the Bible is not that it is being attacked from without, but that it is being ignored from within.” RW

Judges: The Backwards Slide of God's People

Judges is a depressing book. The people have it all (a God who loves them, a Promised Land), but they start to slide backwards and worship other gods. God does not “punish” them; He simply lifts His hand from them and allows other nations (all the “ites”) to take over. When their situation gets bad enough, they call on God again. God raises up a group of people (the Judges), who lead Israel and challenge them to return to God.

Judges 2:7: And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.

- In these verses you can see the people's progression away from God.
- First, there are the days of Joshua (a young man who was glued to Moses and KNEW God for HIMSELF). During the days of Joshua, all the people served God.
- Second, there were the elders who outlived Joshua, but who had seen God do incredible things. However, while Joshua knew God *personally*, these people knew only His works. They didn't KNOW God themselves. When key people in their lives passed on (i.e.: Joshua), they didn't know what to do. We can rely too heavily on the elders we know and love who KNOW God for themselves. It is not enough that we know and talk about the great works God did for THEM; we must know God for ourselves.
- Third, there came “another generation after them” (verse 10), who didn't know God OR His works. This is the product of people who don't know God for themselves. Therefore, the greatest lesson in Judges is: you must know God for YOURSELF.

Judges 21:25: In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

- They come to a point where they are doing what's right in their own eyes, not following God's commands (we have come to this place today in many churches, setting our own standards for Christian living and separation from the world). This happens when people don't know God personally.

Ruth: Hope Exists Even in the Darkest of Spiritual Times

Originally, the book of Ruth was part of the book of Judges (it was divided into two books hundreds of years later). This tells us that in the middle of horribly spiritually dark days, God can do something great.

Ruth is a Moabite (Moab is a heathen, pagan nation). Naomi, a Jew, moves to Moab with her husband. Her sons, while there, marry Orpah and Ruth. Both Naomi's husband and her two sons die. Naomi then decides to return to her land (Israel). Orpah stays in Moab, but Ruth insists on following Naomi wherever she goes (she recognizes that there is something about Naomi).

In the worst possible spiritual climate (a pagan nation), AND while all of Israel is backsliding and ignoring God, Ruth determines that she will get closer to God. Ruth becomes the great grandmother of King David when she marries Boaz. A *MOABITE* GIRL!

I Samuel: The Prophet Samuel and the First King of Israel

Samuel is a boy dedicated to the Lord who rises up to lead the people (he's the last of the Judges in essence, but he also had a great prophetic ministry). Anything Samuel said would happen, happened.

I Samuel chapters 1-12 are about Samuel himself. Chapters 13-31 are about Israel's first king, Saul.

I Samuel 8:6: But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

- The people want a king at this point, not another judge. God is displeased, but says to Samuel "Go ahead, allow it. They want someone sympathetic to them. They don't desire that I would rule over them."

Saul is appointed king of Israel. He is well liked, but he has a serious flaw. He begins to do something, following God's instructions...but then he deviates, changing God's instructions and doing it his *own* way. He will do what *he* wants, but in the name of the Lord. Because of this, Saul self destructs.

I Samuel 13:13: And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

- Samuel tells Saul that God has removed His hand of anointing from him and is going to place it on another, an unknown.

I Samuel 15:22: And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is [as the sin of] witchcraft... (v. 23)

- Saul is told to "go and smite Amalek (a nation which had harmed Israel in the past)" and "destroy all that they have." Saul leaves the king Agag alive and the best of all the animals. When Samuel gets wind of it, he is grieved. He approaches Saul to ask why all these animals (and the king!) have been left alive. Saul declares that he has done God's will and that he was going to keep these animals for the people to use as sacrifices to God in Gilgal.
- The verse above is Samuel's response. In the original writing the words "as the sin of" were not there (they were added later by translators). In other words, God said, "rebellion is witchcraft."
- Saul is finished...he even seeks a witch later, trying desperately to get a word from God. In the end, he will die a failure, the first king of Israel, who wouldn't follow God.

Samuel goes to Jesse's house, where God has sent him to anoint Israel's next king (a king who was not just interested in grand performances for God, but who had his heart in it). Jesse brings all his sons to Samuel, but Samuel is still looking for the king, even when Jesse has "finished." Samuel inquires as to whether there are other sons, and Jesse remembers David out in the field.

David and Saul's conflicts and troubles are recounted in I Samuel.

II Samuel: The Life of King David

When Saul dies, David becomes king of Israel. For about 10 chapters in II Samuel, everything is wonderful. Then David, during a time of year when all kings were to be out at battle, sees Bathsheba bathing on her rooftop. He lusts after her and brings her to the palace. She becomes pregnant and David now has a dark secret to try and cover up (David's mistake; sin can't be covered unless God deals with it).

Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, is one of David's soldiers who is out at war. David calls Uriah home for paid leave, telling him to take time with his wife (to cover his sin). Uriah refuses and sleeps outside, saying that his brothers continue to fight in battle and that he will not take "leave."



Source: <http://www.godweb.org/SmithBibleAtlas/BibleAtlas11sIsraelDavid1000BC.jpg>

David sends Uriah back to battle with a note from the king in his hand. The note (which Uriah delivers himself to the commander) instructs the commander to take Uriah into the heat of the battle...and then retreat. When Uriah dies, David marries Bathsheba and relaxes, because he has “covered” his sin.

But Nathan, a prophet of God, comes to David and tells him a story. He tells David the story of a rich man and a poor man. The rich man, who had all the land he could want and all the lambs he could need, chose to take the poor man’s only lamb (who was like a family pet) when a traveling guest came to visit. He killed the lamb, sparing the many he owned himself, and served it at dinner.

David was furious and declared that this man would die for this. Then Nathan pointed back at David and said “It’s you! You have all the women you need, but you chose to take Uriah’s beloved wife, and kill him for her.”

Even after David’s great sin, he is still known as a man after God’s own heart. The difference between Saul and David was that Saul was all image, while David was all heart, even after his terrible sin.

I Kings: The Kingdom Splits

Solomon is David's second child with Bathsheba (the first child died).

Solomon had what one might call "half-a-heart" for God. He starts out well, but took many pagan wives, even though God said not to (God tells him that when he inherits David's kingdom, he must be careful not to let his heart be drawn away).

Solomon built the Temple (this is great!), but he also spent 13 years building his own mansion. Each of Solomon's pagan wives brought gods and idols into Israel (where Deuteronomy "Hear O Israel" still stands). All of these pagan gods were being worshipped. Because of this leadership, the kingdom of Israel split into the northern kingdom of Israel (capital: Samaria) and the southern kingdom of Judah (capital: Jerusalem). Jeroboam, the general of Solomon's army, ruled the northern kingdom (which is comprised of 10 tribes) and Rehoboam, Solomon's son, ruled the southern kingdom (which is comprised of 2 tribes). Israel was officially in a state of civil war.

In Dan, and in Bethel (both part of the northern kingdom), Jeroboam built an altar so that the people could avoid traveling to the southern kingdom (to Jerusalem) to sacrifice and worship.

Basically, he was making it *convenient* for the people to worship. We are still often far too interested in making it *convenient* to worship. God requires better.

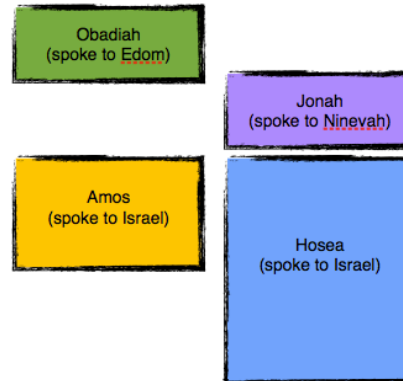
There were about 20 kings in each kingdom, most of them bad (some, like Josiah and Hezekiah were good kings, but they don't last long). Ahab and Jezebel ruled the northern kingdom around 874-853 BC, and were an example of how far Israel had come from God. Elijah went head-to-head with these two and other wicked kings (his ministry is largely recorded in this book).



Source: <http://www.preceptaustin.org/map%20of%20divided%20kingdom.gif>

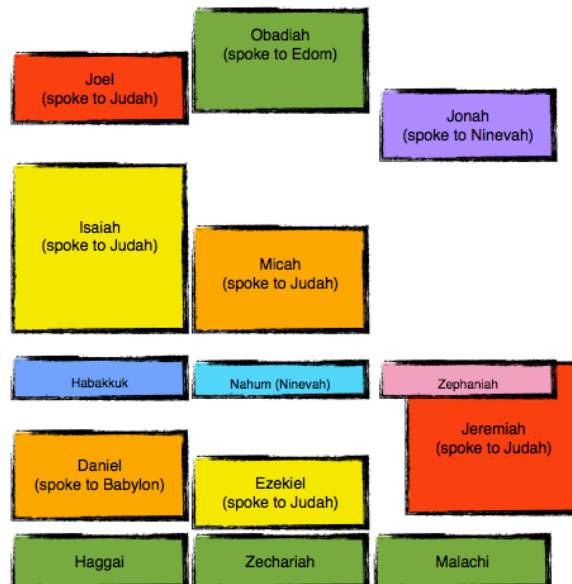
The Kings of Israel (all wicked)

Jeroboam I (933-911) twenty-two years
 Nadab (911-910) two years
 Baasha (910-887) twenty-four years
 Elah (887-886) two years
 Zimri (886) seven days
 Omri (886-875) twelve years
 Ahab (875-854) twenty-two years
 Ahaziah (855-854) two years
 Jehoram (Joram) (854-843) twelve years
 Jehu (843-816) twenty-eight years
 Jehoahaz (820-804) seventeen years
 Jehoash (Joash) (806-790) sixteen years
 Jeroboam II (790-749) forty-one years
 Zechariah' (748) six months
 Shallum (748) one month
 Menahem (748-738) ten years
 Pekahiah (738-736) two years
 Pekah (748-730) twenty years
 Hoshea (730-721) nine years



The Kings of Judah (8 were good)

Rehoboam (933-916) seventeen years
 Abijam (915-913) three years
 Asa (Good) (912-872) forty-one years
 Jehoshaphat (Good) (874-850) twenty-five years
 Jehoram (850-843) eight years
 Ahaziah (843) one year
 Athaliah (843-837) six years
 Joash (Good) (843-803) forty years
 Amaziah (Good) (803-775) 29 years
 Azariah (Uzziah) (Good) (787-735) fifty-two years
 Jotham (Good) (749-734) sixteen years
 Ahaz (741-726) sixteen years
 Hezekiah (Good) (726-697) 29 years
 Manasseh (697-642) fifty-five years
 Amon (641-640) two years
 Josiah (Good) (639-608) thirty-one years
 Jehoahaz (608) three months
 Jehoiachim (608-597) eleven years
 Jehoiachin (597) three months
 Zedekiah (597-586) eleven years



Prophets of Restoration (536-445 BC)



II Kings: The People of Israel are Conquered

These two kingdoms coexisted for many years. They were both drifting further and further from God. Elisha was the main prophet in II Kings who warned the people.

Eventually, the northern kingdom was conquered by Assyria (where ten tribes were living, and thus we hear about the “ten lost tribes of Israel,” who never returned to their own land again as a group). The southern kingdom was later conquered by Babylon.

I & II Chronicles: Lineage is Traced

These books go over some of the same material from I & II Samuel and I & II Kings, but they include genealogies and also discuss the GOOD KINGS of the southern kingdom of Judah (this is where Jerusalem is, remember). This kingdom takes longer to fall to Babylon (because there are *some* good kings).

I & II Chronicles basically ignores the northern kingdom because they were “more wicked” and built their own temples, ignoring the Temple in Jerusalem (not going there to worship). All in all, these two books (all the “I & II”s were divided later) try to emphasize the GOOD that exists in Israel.

The reason for all the genealogies...they establish lineage. Only those from the tribe of LEVI were fit (according to God) to serve in the Temple. Thus, they needed to know WHO was part of the tribe of Levi.

Even today, the descendants from this tribe are known to Israel; the men of this tribe are being trained for the priesthood, and will serve in the third temple (many of the implements for this temple have already been built).



Golden Menorah near the Western Wall in Jerusalem, ready for the third temple.

Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther follow I & II Chronicles (as they are history books), but actually *chronologically* take place at the *end* of the Old Testament.

Books of Poetry: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

Job is the oldest book in the Bible, written around Genesis 11 & 12, when Abraham is just setting out from his home. Job is from Uz (not Oz!).

Job is an example of someone serving God with all their heart, doing what they know to do (even before there was a Moses, a Tabernacle, a people of God, etc.)...and everything still goes horrifically *wrong*. God allows Satan to take everything from Job because He is proving to the devil that Job is not just serving God when things are rosy.

Job is on the opposite end from Proverbs on the diagram (end of this section) because sometimes you'll be doing everything right and things will go right...but other times you'll be doing everything right and God will allow you to experience trials. This book is the story of *how* children of God live through trials (not, as some believe, the explanation of *why* children of God live through trials – that is never explained in the book of Job).

Psalms is written mostly by David, but there are also some psalms written by Solomon, Moses, etc. All of the Psalms were compiled by David.

Psalms is put right in the middle of diagram because it contains every emotion known to man. There is an example of everything here.

Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings compiled by Solomon around the middle of his life. He is no longer “young and in love” as he is in the Song of Solomon, but he has yet to become the disillusioned, “bitter” man he is in Ecclesiastes. The sayings are collected from many different cultures of his day.

Proverbs is not a book of promises from God. It is a book of *probabilities*. In general, if you “train up a child in the way they should go,” the *probability* is that “when they are old they will not depart from it.” Many people get frustrated because they believe Proverbs contains promises from God (Proverbs is in the Word of God, but the sayings are not the *words of God*). The book says “Do things right, and things will go right.” But this is not always true; there are always exceptions.

Ecclesiastes is written late in Solomon's life, after he has married hundreds of pagan wives, etc. He is highly discouraging in this book. He uses the word *vanity* almost 40 times. This book paints a picture of him lamenting “is this really worth it?” We also have days like this.

Solomon also uses the phrase “under the sun” a lot, saying that all on earth is meaningless (so “lift your eyes above the sun” is the message to us!). You can see some of his despair in Ecclesiastes 9:11 and beyond.

However, at the end of the book, he makes an observation. He says that sometimes life feels futile. BUT “fear God, and keep His commandments.” Even when it feels pointless, we are instructed to do these two things.

In Philippians 4:13, Paul says “I can do all things through Christ...” What he means is, I can go through good days and bad days, highs and lows – no matter how I feel. You have to read the verse in context to get this meaning.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon has wealth and possessions (he’s very, very wealthy), but these objects of his affection don’t fill his heart. It contrasts to the Song of Songs, where his object of affection fills his heart. So it is with us - our heart is only filled by God, not anything else offered by the world.

Song of Solomon (Hebrew: “Song of Songs,” Solomon’s greatest song)

This book is written when Solomon is young and in love. The characters in this book include Solomon, the Shulamite girl, the Shulamite’s family/brothers (who treat her horribly) and the Daughters of Jerusalem (the ladies off in the corner commenting on everything going on). In the KJV, they don’t give you the name(s) of the person(s) speaking. But in newer translations, the speaker is written in, so it’s easier to understand.

For example, in 2:1-3, someone says “I am the Rose of Sharon/Lily of the Valley.” Many have attributed this to the *groom* (and thus Jesus – where we get “Rose of Sharon” as a name of Jesus from), but it’s actually the *bride* speaking, saying that she is very *common* (like the Rose of Sharon, a common flower in Israel). You have to know who’s talking. The King responds by telling his precious bride that she is a lily among thorns, beautiful to Him.

Song of Songs 8:11: Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

- Solomon has everything! There is a vineyard of his, 50 miles north of Jerusalem, where the Shulamite and her family till the land.
- She has NO hope of ever meeting the king. She is treated horribly by her family and even says she doesn’t have time to care for her personal appearance. She is the original “Cinderella.”

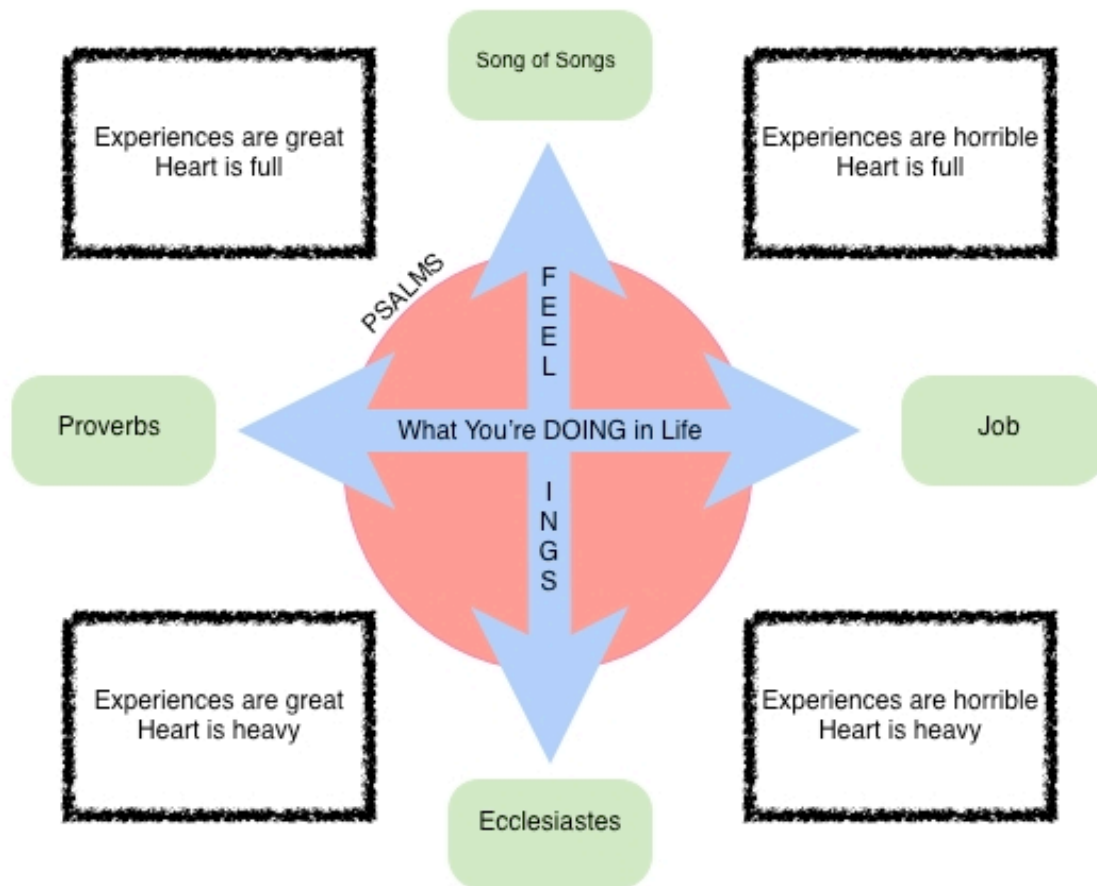
Sometimes, Solomon would disguise himself and ride throughout his kingdom. He does this one day (dressed as a humble shepherd), and meets the Shulamite girl. They fall in love and he proposes marriage, saying he will return in the future to take her to a beautiful place. She does not know he is the King.

In Chapter 5, you can see the Daughters of Jerusalem asking “What’s so special about him?” But when he returns, to their amazement, he’s the King! He finds the Shulamite, who is bowed in respect, and lifts her from the ground. She recognizes her King as the same shepherd she fell in love with.

This is the story of Jesus and His church. When He came, He was a humble baby. The world only sees Him as a humble shepherd, but He is still the King of Kings, and someday He’ll return in all His splendor and glory (I John 3:1). Though we’ve never seen Jesus in all His splendor and glory, we live by faith (II Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:8) and know that our “humble shepherd” is the King of Kings.

Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs are on opposite ends of the diagram because some days, you will have amazing feelings for God. Other days you will have more of the “vanity of vanities” sentiment. But regardless, serve God!

These books are also called the “Wisdom Literature” (see the diagram below for how they all fit together and provide guidance for every stage and feeling of life).



The point of the diagram: no matter how you feel or how circumstances are: serve God, carry on!

The Prophets

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel (Major Prophets = books of longer length)

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi (Minor)

There are more false doctrines that come out of the prophetic books than any other books because people have a lack of understanding.

A distinction...

Prophecy: what's said

Prophesy: the verb, to prophesy (you prophesy a prophecy)

The first *prophet* is mentioned in Jude 14-16. Enoch was the first prophet to *speak*, and he spoke about one of the last things yet to happen: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

The first *prophecy* in the Bible is given by God himself in Genesis 3 when he says "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Prophecy can be FOREtelling (as in, speaking of something that *will* happen, in the future) or FORTHTelling (speaking out about *now*, not something unknown/in the future, just something that needs to be emphasized; most often the prophets were used to tell God's people what the Lord was saying to them *now*). Preaching, teaching and speaking under the anointing of God is in this "forthtelling" category.

Revelation 19:10: And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

- The angel John fell down to worship (because he appeared such a great and powerful being) tells John not to worship him, but Jesus. Then he says "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The ultimate reason for prophecy is to testify to the power of Jesus. Jesus' fulfilling of prophecy was an amazing, supernatural occurrence.

For example, if you make a prediction about something and use only one qualifier (it will rain tomorrow), the odds of your "prophecy" coming true are 1 in 2. It either rains or doesn't.

But if you add another qualifier (it will rain in Fredericton), the odds are now 1 in 4. It could rain, and happen in Fredericton. But, it could also rain but not happen in Fredericton. It could also not rain, but still be Fredericton. And it could also not rain *and* not be Fredericton.

If you have three qualifiers, the odds are 1 in 8. Four qualifiers: 1 in 16. And so on, exponentially....

If you have a prediction with 10 qualifiers, the odds of all 10 coming true are 1 in 1024.

There were 25 prophecies about Jesus on Easter weekend. All of these came to pass within a 24 hour period (approximately). The odds of *all 25 happening in 24 hours to 1 individual are...*

1 in 33, 554, 432!

And that was only Easter weekend. There were 109 prophecies made by Old Testament prophets about Jesus. The odds of all of these prophecies being fulfilled in one person are 1 in several BILLION.

And keep in mind that these prophets were dead and gone 500 years before the time of Jesus' birth. They did not know him personally or amend their prophecies in any way to fit the man.

Luke 24:27: And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

- Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Though they don't know who He is, they are amazed by what He says about how He fulfilled prophecy. They recognize Him when He breaks the bread at the house later that night.

Ephesians 2:18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

- We are founded on the prophetic books!

There are 17 prophetic books, but 16 authors, as Jeremiah also wrote Lamentations. The prophets were active from approximately 820 BC to 420 BC.

The books are not in chronological order (they are instead grouped by “major” and “minor”). Here is the breakdown of prophets (when and to whom they prophesied):

Time Period	Judah (South. Kingdom)	Israel (North. Kingdom)	Prophets to Other Nations
<p>Pre-Exile Before 722 BC Both Judah and Israel are still in their own land, not in captivity, but the kingdom is split.</p>	<p>Joel Isaiah Micah</p>	<p>Amos Hosea</p>	<p>Jonah (Ninevah) Obadiah (Edom)</p>
<p>Israel’s Captivity About 722 BC The 10 northern tribes of Israel are taken captive by Assyria, but the Southern kingdom of Judah has yet to fall.</p>	<p>Zephaniah Jeremiah Habakkuk</p>		
<p>Judah’s Captivity Around 600 BC Judah is sent into exile when Babylon conquers the Southern kingdom. Jews are taken to Babylon as captives. The prophets who speak here are known as the “Exilic Prophets” or prophets of the exile.</p>	<p>Lamentations Ezekiel</p>		<p>Daniel (Babylon) Nahum (Ninevah)</p>
<p>Medo-Persia Around 539 BC In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon and allows some of the Jews to return to their land, allowing them some religious freedom. The prophets of this time are known as “Post-Exilic.”</p>	<p>Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>		

Notice that only two prophets speak to Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Many speak to Judah, the Southern Kingdom because there were still praying, worshipping people there. Israel, the Northern Kingdom, never came back as a group from captivity. But Judah did!

The overall setting for *all* the prophetic books is a tug of war between God (the prophets) and the wicked kings.

A tip for reading and understanding the time frame of the books: look for the ruling king while reading one of the prophets. Then return to Kings or Chronicles to read about the social and political climate at the time.

Matthew 13:17: For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

1 Peter 1:10-12: Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

- The prophets did not have the privilege of living in the New Testament. They had no idea how their prophecies would come true. God revealed to them that their prophecies were not for their time, that they were prophesying about a time in the future.

Prophecy looks like a mountain range to the prophets. The prophet looking out over the future sees the mountain peaks of prophecy, pieces, big events (Jesus' birth, Crucifixion, Pentecost, Antichrist, etc). The people of Israel, who knew the words of the prophets, were so excited when Jesus came because they believed this prophecy would be fulfilled:

Isaiah 61:1-3: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

But that comma is a 2000 year comma that represents the church age!!

The prophets prophesied about a messiah who would come and do all these things, but seeing only the mountaintops, they did not know that 2000 years of "church age" would come between Pentecost and the Antichrist.

This is why when Jesus reads in the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath (after His temptation in Luke 4), he reads: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach

the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And He puts a period at the end of it, not a comma. He returned the book to the minister and sat down. And everyone's eyes were on Him, because they expected the rest of the verse, that He would become their king and bring vengeance. But He said "this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He, being God, knew of the 2000 year gap ahead. He knew that *part* of the prophecy was for now, *part* for later.

Which brings us to another point on prophecy. Foretelling prophecies are given in a time far preceding the fulfillment. When prophets look through their telescope of prophecy, they see the whole fulfillment. Often there is a bit of fulfillment here, a bit there, another bit here, and finally, the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy. Throughout time, many people have believed they have seen prophecies fulfilled, but they may not have been experiencing the "ultimate" fulfillment of that prophecy. For example...

Daniel 11:31: And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

- In the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew, the Jews have returned to their homeland and have rebuilt the Temple. A ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes, desiring to consolidate his power, outlaws Jewish traditions and religious rites around 170 BC. When the Jews resist, he sends out an army to enforce his decree. He desecrates the Temple when he sacrifices a pig (an unclean animal) on the altar.
- All the Jews living at this time truly believed they were living in a day of fulfilled prophecy (Daniel 11:31). And yes, they probably were...but the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will be when the Antichrist sets up an idol of himself in the Temple.

How Prophecy Creates False Doctrines:

For example, there's a prophecy about the millennial reign that talks about the church ruling the world and conquering. But some have tried to take this "post church-age" prophecy and bring it into the church age. They say that the church should take up arms and conquer the world. But that prophecy is not for this time.

Ezra

Ezra records about his own life, but also the life of Zerubbabel, a governor of Israel, under whom the Temple is rebuilt (after the return of Judah to their land during the Medo-Persian rule) and the law restored. Haggai, the prophet, encourages the people when they become discouraged during this time.

Nehemiah

Nehemiah lives during the time of the restoration and sees a beautiful Temple in Jerusalem with no walls to protect the city. So he helps lead the nation to rebuild the walls.

However, during his time, there is still a problem: the people aren't living for God. The last word in the Old Testament is "curse" (Malachi 4:6: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.). With that final word, God doesn't speak to His people again for 400 years. And then in the opening chapters of the New Testament, John the Baptist begins prophesying again.

Esther

Her Jewish family had been exiled from Judah, and had never returned to their land. So they still lived in Medo-Persia. Through a series of events, Hadassah, a Jewish girl, becomes Esther, Queen of Persia.

But Haman, the noble and vizier of Esther's husband, King Ahasuerus, still wants the Jews wiped out. Since many of the Jews still lived in Persia at this time, *had Haman succeeded, the Jews truly would have been wiped out.*

But God always raises up someone in dark times. Esther fought Haman with a holy life and a dedication to God. All through the Old Testament, this story has persisted: the devil's plot (Haman in this story) VS God's forces (Esther).

Mordecai told Esther that if she didn't do this for Israel, God would have to provide someone else.

Esther 4:14: For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

New Testament

During the 400 “silent years” between Malachi & Matthew, there is no prophecy, no communication between God and His people. John the Baptist began the cry again in the opening chapters of the gospels.

However, this time is not wasted. God was working on His people’s behalf, even though they weren’t listening for Him.

Important happenings during the 400 silent years include:

1. Greece coming to power

When Greece comes to power, they bring literature and language. The Greeks had created a language of travel, business - a sort of world language of the day. Their language was very descriptive; for example, they had multiple words for “love,” not just one (like in English). Because of Greek language, the New Testament was originally written in a language that everyone of that day could understand (this was not true in the Old Testament).

2. Rome coming to power

The Romans control the world of the New Testament. They give us something less lofty - but more practical - than the Greeks: roads. Because of the need to transport soldiers and conquering armies quickly and easily, the Romans built roads. Travelers could now get from one location to another *quickly* and *safely* (because the roads were patrolled). Because of Roman roads, the gospel was also able to move quickly from city to city.



Ancient Roman shops on the main road of an ancient Roman city in Israel. Rome was the height of civilization.

3. Synagogues becoming part of Jewish culture

The prophets prophesied that the Jews would lose their Temple. While they are exiled, the Temple is destroyed. Of course, when they return from exile, they begin rebuilding, but for 70 years there is no Temple and the Jews build synagogues. These synagogues (which appear nowhere in the Old Testament) were places of *teaching*. The Temple was a place to worship God, but the synagogue was a place to learn. Even when the Temple was rebuilt, they kept synagogues.

4. Dispersion/Diaspora

The Jews of this time had been dispersed to Assyria, Babylon & Persia. Therefore, many Jews live *outside* Israel. In Acts 2:8, when the people ask “And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”... these people are Jews who had returned to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. They spoke different languages because they grew up in other nations.

There were two groups of Jews in Jesus’ day that were distinct from each other. One group, known as the **Hellenistic Jews**, proclaimed to be Jewish, dedicated to the faith. In reality, these Jews did little to *show* that they were Jewish; they had disregarded many Jewish rites and practices.

The “opposite” of these Hellenistic Jews were **Hebraic Jews**, who were indeed still practicing the same faith. Many Christians today have adopted a Hellenistic way of living for God. They have disregarded much of what actually makes one a Christian.

There are four groups of religious Jews in Jesus’ day that play an important role:

1. Pharisees

The word pharisee comes from the Aramaic “*pariš*,” meaning “separate.” The Pharisees attempted to follow the Law and constantly prove their holiness to others (some extremists would walk around with their eyes closed banging into things so as to avoid looking on a woman to lust after her). They believed in the resurrection of the dead, as well as angels and the supernatural (something the Sadducees did not believe in).

2. Sadducees

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or the supernatural (unlike the Pharisees). They only believed in the Pentateuch, and did not believe in oral law, only the written law (the Pharisees believed in oral law, which later morphed into the Talmud). Many were in the priesthood, and many were political opportunists who worked with and would do deals with the Romans.

3. Essenes

The Essenes were very much like monks. They lived off in communes. They were the Jews who would often copy the scripture (i.e.: Dead Sea Scrolls); thanks to them, many copies were made.

4. Zealots

The Zealots were always trying to overthrow the Romans. Barabbas, the criminal offered to the people instead of Jesus, was a Zealot. This is probably why it was an “easy decision” for them to choose Barabbas over the innocent Jesus - he was a hero of the Jewish people, a revolutionary of sorts.

Books of Importance to the Jews & Jewish History:

1. **Torah:** first 5 books, simply “The Law” to the Jews
2. “**The Writings**”: prophets, poetical books, history books of the Old Testament
3. **Apocrypha:** books written during the 400 silent years. They have some historically accurate details, but are *not inspired by God* and contain legends as well.
4. **Talmud:** a collection of traditions compiled and written up by the rabbis. The Torah was law, given by God, but this book simply contained Jewish traditions. For example, this book defined what a “Sabbath-day’s journey” was, and this phrase becomes common in the New Testament. Jesus had problems with the Pharisees because they honored the Talmud but not the heart of the Law of God (the Torah). Unfortunately for many, the Talmud became more important than the Torah. Jesus never said “ignore the law.” When Jesus came, He did say to ignore the picky rules of the Pharisees because people were living more by the Talmud than the Torah.

Roman Emperors in the New Testament

Julius Caesar dies several decades before Jesus is born, but his military victories created the largest empire of its age.

The first emperor was **Caesar Augustus**, who was in power when Jesus was born. He is mentioned in the Christmas story in Luke chapter 2. He carried out the census to consolidate his power, but in fact was helping fulfill prophecy, ensuring that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.

Caesar Tiberius was the adopted son of Augustus who was overly suspicious and had a penchant for killing people. He spent the last 10 years of his reign living outside of Rome on the island of Capri. He was smothered by his successor. Tiberius ruled while Pontius Pilate was a governor. In Luke 3:1 he is mentioned.

Caligula had a mental illness and demanded worship for himself. He was the emperor during the early years of Acts.

Claudius had a paralysis in one side of his face. He was a pretty good emperor, but in Acts 18:2 (“And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.”) Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome because he was purging the empire of all religious cults.

Caesar Nero ruled around AD 64. He wanted to build a golden palace for himself. The Great Fire of Rome was blamed on the Christians (who were always talking about “fire”), but Nero may have set it in motion. Many Christians, including Peter and Paul, were persecuted under Nero (Acts 25).

From AD 68-69 there are three emperors back-to-back (Galba, Otho, Vitellius); each kept overtaking the former.

In December of AD 69, **Vespasian** became emperor. He sends Titus (his son and general) to Jerusalem. It is Titus who destroys the Temple.

Regarding the destruction of the Temple:

The people who stood and said “crucify him!” also said “His blood be on us and on our children.” The generation that was slaughtered by Titus in AD 70 was the generation of children that they spoke of.

Titus served as emperor from AD 79-81.

Domitian ruled from AD 81-96. John is exiled to Patmos under Domitian, who also demanded worship and persecuted Christians.

What does “Testament” mean?

“An arrangement made by one party, proposed to another. It may be accepted or rejected, but it *cannot* be altered.”

When a testament is accepted, it binds both parties to its terms.

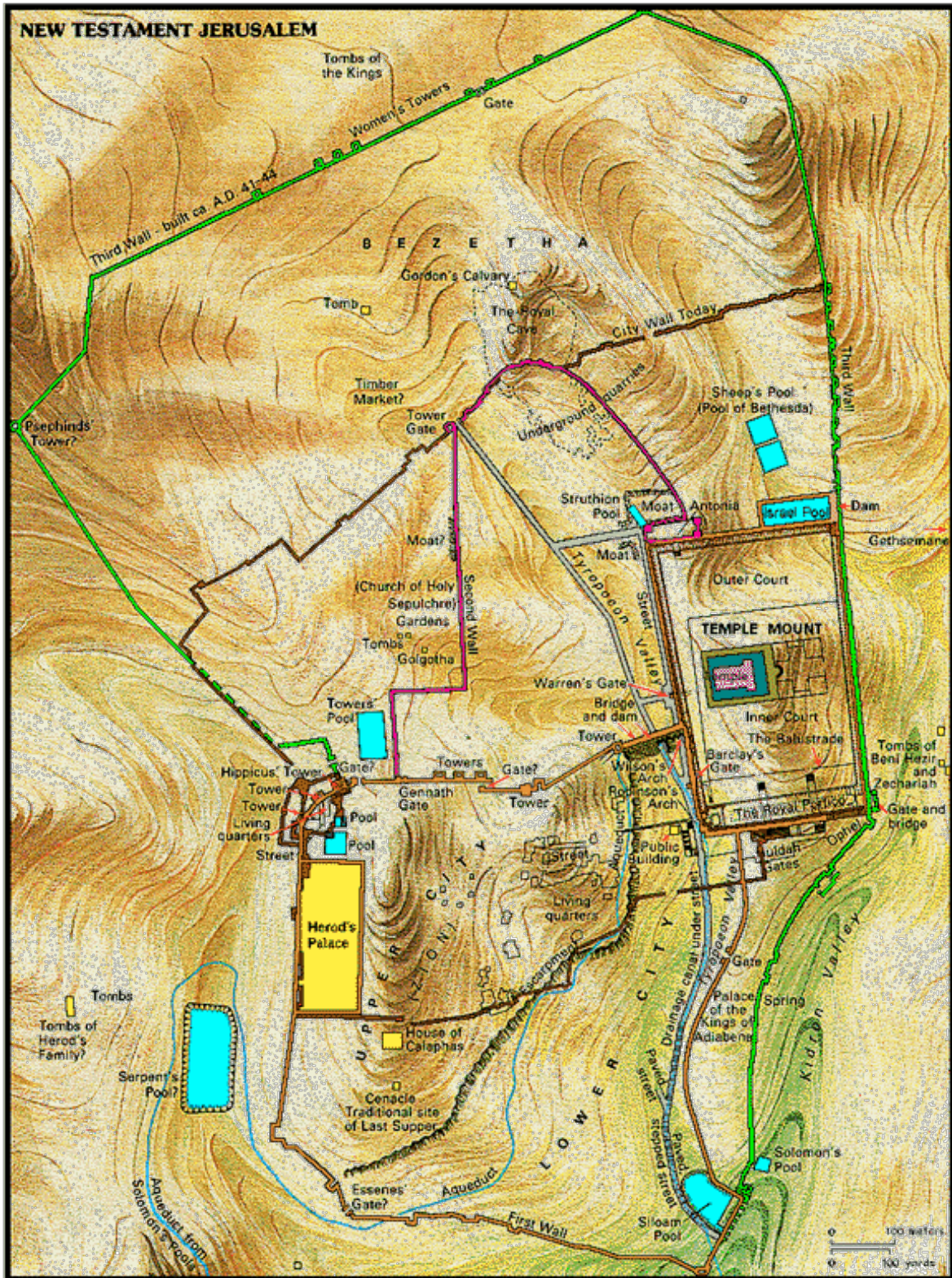
History of the New Testament

The New Testament has 27 books and 8 authors (assuming that Paul wrote Hebrews).

All of the authors are Jewish except Luke, who is a Greek doctor).

The books are written between AD 45 and AD 100.

There are 4 Gospels, 1 history book (Acts), 21 letters/epistles (most written by Paul), and Revelation.



Note: Though the Church of the Holy Sepulchre claims to be the site of the death and burial of Christ, the more likely location is Gordon's Calvary, located at the top of the map. Source: <http://www.biblesnet.com/images/14.jpg>

“Skull Hill,” and the empty tomb at
Gordon’s Calvary.



Gethsemane (where there are 2000-year-old
trees), and the steps to the Temple Mount.



The Gospels

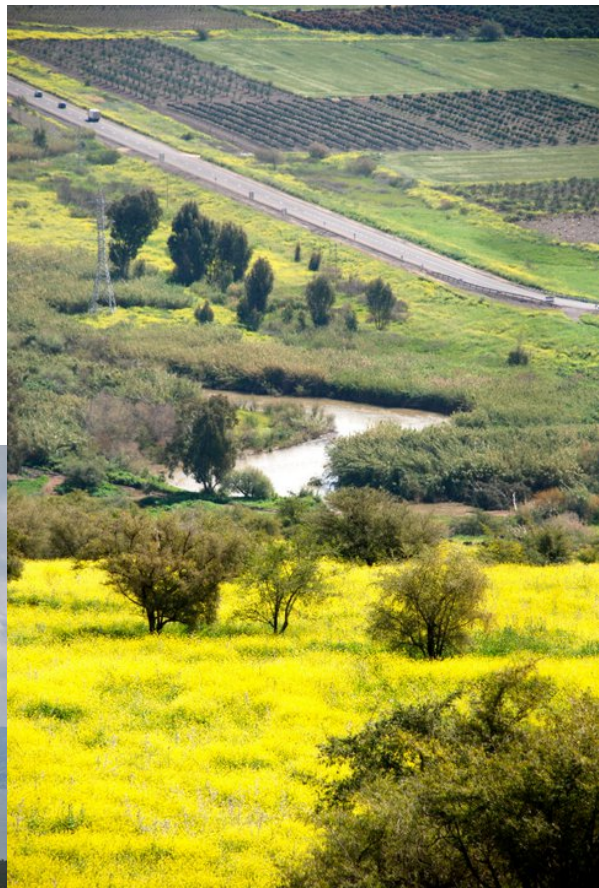
In the Gospels, the ruling emperors also have people under them, like the Herods, etc. All those rulers are *under* Rome.

Christianity of the day came face-to-face with all the gods of Rome, Greece and other pagan nations. Sometimes modern day Christians think they have it quite hard with atheism and a sexual culture, but all the spirits that exist today existed then. Christianity was born into a rough world.

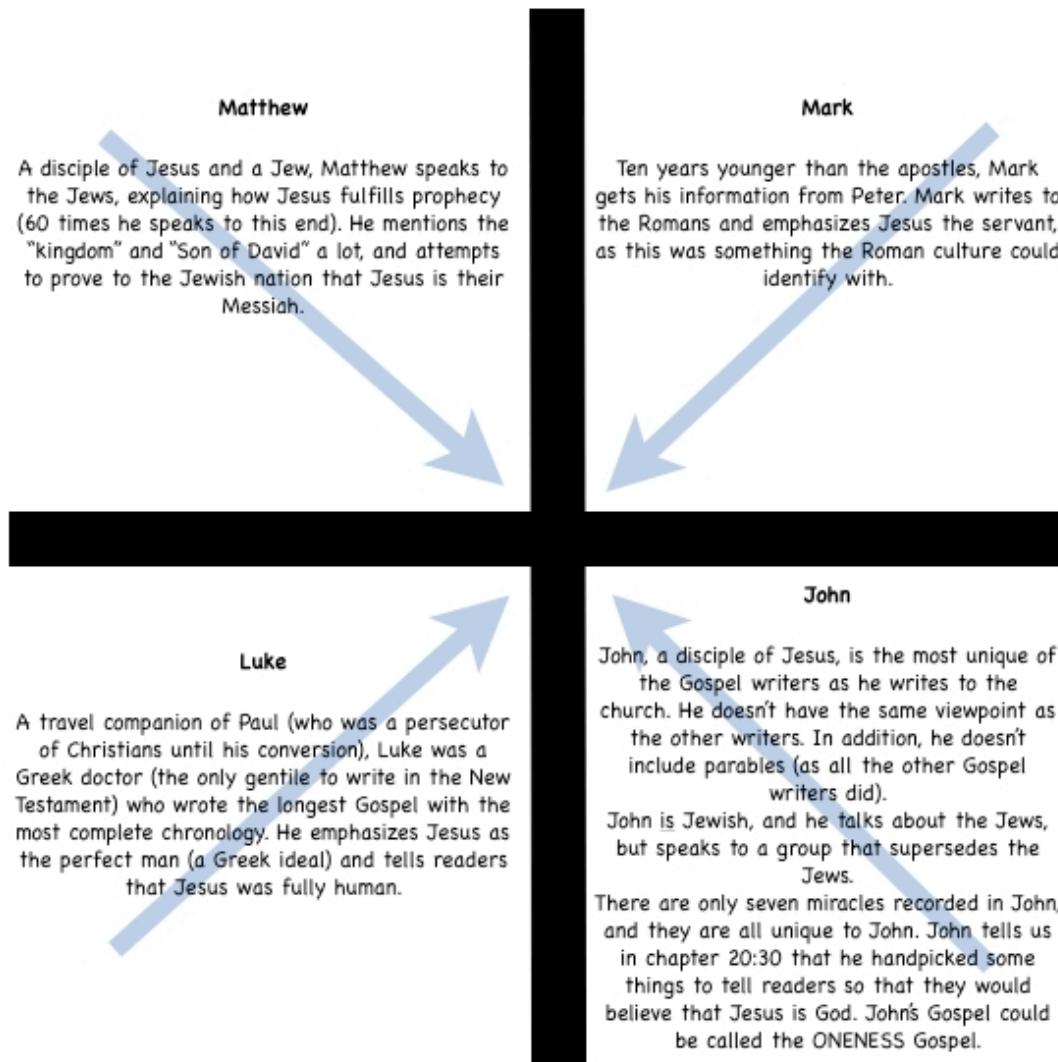
The New Testament doesn't actually start until the cross happens. Jesus said "the New Testament in my blood." The New Testament *begins at the cross*. That is why Jesus says "today you will be with me in paradise" to the thief on the cross; it's still the Old Testament. Jesus IS the New Testament. He himself lived under the Old Testament.

The Gospels are written from four different perspectives. Matthew, Mark & Luke are called "Synoptic" ("syn" meaning "synonym" and "optic" meaning "to see") because they look at Jesus in the same manner - to prove Him the Christ to their own culture.

The Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River,
both sites mentioned in the New Testament
Gospels.



The four books all contain the same Gospel, but they emphasize different things to their own people. You can think of the writers of the Gospels as all viewing the same traffic accident, but from different places at the intersection.



Acts

The book of Acts is the link that connects the philosophy, teachings and actions of Jesus to the personal, everyday life of the believer and what he or she can feel and experience. You can't get from the Gospels to the Epistles/Letters and understand them without Acts and the Day of Pentecost.

If you didn't have the Acts link, you would wonder "Who's Paul? Where did all these 'churches' come from? There were no churches in the Gospels!"

Jesus did not start a church in the Gospels. He *paid* for a church in the Gospels.



Sometimes when reading Acts, we emphasize the first two chapters to the detriment of the others. We are a [whole] book-of-Acts church!

The book is divided into multiple sections:

Acts 1:7-8: And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

- The "power" in verse seven is God's, but there's also a power for us in verse eight: the power to be witnesses.

Four Sections in Acts as Shown in Acts 1:8

1. “In Jerusalem,” the city
1:1-8:3
2. “In all Judaea/in Samaria,” the province of Palestine (Israel) and Samaria (just above)**
8:4-11:18
3. “Unto the uttermost part of the earth”
11:19-21:16
4. Paul’s Imprisonment
21:17-28:31



Source: <http://www.biblesnet.com/maps3/The%20Early%20Church.jpg>

**Note: Samaria was a Roman province, the general area of the old Northern Kingdom. The 10 lost tribes never returned as a whole group, but some of their descendants returned to this area. Since they had intermarried, adopted pagan religious practices, etc., the Jews in Judaea (former Judah, the Southern Kingdom where the Temple remained in Jerusalem) considered these Samaritans “half-blooded” Jews who were not pure. The Jews of Judaea (who considered themselves to have a more pure lineage) did not like the Samaritans.

Chapter By Chapter Overview of Acts

Luke and Acts are both written by Luke. He writes to Theophilus. Though it's possible that Luke wrote to a real person, "Theophilus" was also an honorary title among learned Romans and Jews and literally meant "friend of God" or "[be] loved by God" in the Koine Greek language of the New Testament. In this sense, Luke wrote to prove Jesus to the Greeks by writing to each of them as a "friend of God."

Acts 1: Jesus ascends after leaving his disciples instructions and telling them to go to Jerusalem and "wait for the promise."

Acts 2: The Day of Pentecost is fulfilled (in 2:1, the words "fully come" actually mean "being fulfilled"). There had always been a Day of Pentecost, a Jewish festival day when they celebrated Moses receiving the law on Sinai. But on *this* day of Pentecost, Pentecost is put in hearts and believers are given power to live holy, power to live the higher law that Jesus preached.

On this Day of Pentecost, Peter preaches, but he actually preaches something he doesn't believe. Peter believed that this Holy Ghost was only for Jews. But under the anointing of God, he says "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to *all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.*" (2:39) That's not just Jews!

2:42: And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Doctrine was extremely important to the first century church, and so should it be today, as they are still our pattern.

2:45: And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. Directed by God, the apostles told the people to sell all they had and bring the money so the church could live communally. When persecution came, the church didn't lose a lot because they didn't *have* a lot. This teaches us that God can (and will) use leadership to direct His people on issues current to the time (for example, today we turn to our spiritual leadership to set some specific guidelines on things like the internet, which was naturally not specifically written about in the Bible.

2:47: Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

If we do what *we're* supposed to do every day, God will do that *He's* supposed to do every day.

Acts 3: Peter & John preach to the people at the Temple after the healing of the lame man.

Acts 4: Peter & John are arrested for preaching Jesus and don't pray for "deliverance," but "boldness" to continue speaking God's Word.

Acts 5: In this chapter, the apostles are again directing the people to sell their possessions and live communally. Ananias and Sapphira have land that they sell, but they keep part of the money for themselves (while telling the apostles that they have given it all to them). They are smitten dead for lying.

5:40-42: ...and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

They didn't stop preaching, even when beaten. We need more of this in the 21st century church. I can do all things.... I can handle the ups *and* the downs. I don't want to stand behind the apostle Paul at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We suffer relatively little today.

Acts 6: Two church cliques get offended at each other (Hebrews & Grecians) because the widows of one group did not get their "bouquet of flowers" (the general idea of "daily ministration").

6:2: Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables.

In other words, it's not sensible for us to leave getting instruction from God so we can deliver flowers to you at the hospital.

6:3-4: Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

They decide that they need some people to carry out these daily "ministration" tasks, and are probably taking their cue from passages like the one in Exodus where Jethro tells Moses that he needs to stop dealing with all the "little problems" among the people. In 6:4, we see that our leaders are supposed to give themselves to prayer and ministry of the word. If your leaders are doing that, it's far more beneficial than a bouquet of flowers!

6:5: And the saying pleased the whole multitude.

The people were pleased with this decision! Today, they'd vote out the pastor! Stephen was one of the men appointed to do these "menial tasks." After Stephen's ministry (he's a "layman," in our modern-day terms), persecution begins and the church is PUSHED out of Jerusalem by God. To that point, they had been unwilling to leave.

Philip was another doing these menial tasks; it was he who baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, a treasury official at the court of Queen Candace. And *he's not even an apostle!*

Acts 7: Stephen ministers and is stoned.

Acts 8: Because of the ministry of Stephen, Philip, etc., the church begins to move.

8:4: Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts 9: In this chapter we meet Saul, who persecuted Christians (he is mentioned in Acts 8:1 when Stephen is persecuted). Saul was never witnessed to, was never a disciple of Jesus. He was intent on wiping out Christianity since he himself was a devout Jew, a Pharisee. He had a divine encounter with God on the Damascus road.

At this point, the infilling of Pentecost happened about 10 years ago.

Acts 10: This is the chapter where the gentiles become part of the church. We wouldn't be in the church without this chapter!

Peter has a dream where a great sheet of animals drops onto him. God says to him "eat." But Peter, being a good Jew who doesn't eat unclean meat, refuses. And God says, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common [and unclean]." (10:15)

Then God tells Peter to go to the house of a praying gentile, Cornelius. Peter does as God commands and finds Cornelius, who tells Peter he has had a vision and was told by God to find Peter.

10:34: Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.

This was a revelation to Peter. Until this point, he had believed that this experience, this salvation, was only for the Jews.

10:44-46: While Peter yet spake these words (preached), the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (Jews) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. *For they heard them speak with tongues*, and magnify God.

The Jews were shocked, but truly believed that the gentiles had received God's Spirit *because* they heard them speak in other *tongues*.

You cannot "have the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues," as some believe today. THIS IS HOW the first century church knew the gentiles received God's Spirit, and it's still how we know today.

There are all kinds of evidences of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, but there is only one initial evidence of the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:47 also confirms that people who have already received the Holy Ghost do indeed need to be baptized in Jesus' name. Peter asks "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Acts 11: Peter recounts his tale to the apostles and church in Judaea.

11:17: Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

Peter says "who was I to think that gentiles shouldn't be a part of the church?"

11:19: Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only.

Because of persecution, the church has been pushed to many areas of the world (11:19 begins the "uttermost part of the earth" section), but most of them are still preaching *only* to the Jews (people who are just like them).

11:20-21: And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Some of those who left Jerusalem *didn't* speak exclusively to Jews. They talked to people outside their comfort zone.

11:25-26: Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. *And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

Barnabas, a man being used in Antioch, went to find Saul (Paul), who had been kicked out of Jerusalem and rejected by the elders because he was preaching and reaching to gentiles and being far too revolutionary for their liking.

The rest of Acts is in Antioch. The disciples were called Christians first not in Jerusalem (where the Holy Ghost was first poured out, where the church began), but in Antioch because they reached to people beyond themselves. Jerusalem should have had this honor, but Antioch had a heart for people, and God placed His hand on *them*.

Acts 12: James (brother of John, not James the brother of Jesus) - one of the apostles - is killed and they also take Peter, but the church prays. This is where we find Rhoda answering the door but leaving Peter out in the street because the others thought she was crazy. “We’re here praying for Peter, who’s in prison. He can’t possibly be at the door!”

Acts 13: Missionary journeys begin. Paul & Barnabas go to Cyprus, where their message is well received by gentiles. But many Jews are angry that Paul & Barnabas are offering salvation to the gentiles. They expel them from the coasts of their lands.



Acts 14: Paul & Barnabas arrive in Iconium and begin preaching again. There they also divide the population (those who side with the annoyed Jews and those who listen to the apostles and accept salvation). They leave for other towns and continue preaching. They are beaten and persecuted by the opinionated Jews and their followers, but they eventually arrive home safely.

Acts 15: Judaizers follow Paul around. They are still mad that God is saving gentiles, and they preach that one must first be Jewish before he or she can be a Christian. They consistently undermine Paul’s ministry, coming behind him and telling the people that they must be Jewish first and keep all the Old Testament laws. They demand that Paul have this question answered by

the church council, which is in Jerusalem. So Paul and Barnabas return to Jerusalem for this discussion.

The question before the council is “To what extent should gentiles obey the law of Moses (be Jewish)?”

Peter says that there should be no distinction made between the two groups; they are “the same,” saved by the grace of God. (15:7-11)

Paul & Barnabas detail how they are seeing great things among the gentiles. They feel that God is prospering the ministry, so it must be a good thing as is.

Then James, the half brother of Jesus, a very righteous man and a champion of strict observance, addresses the council. He says “We don’t need to make gentiles Jewish so that they may get to God. They don’t need to follow the Jewish law; they don’t have any idea how to do so and that was only a shadow of Jesus anyway. BUT they must abstain from *pollutions*. They must not bring their pagan practices into the church. They must no longer practice the pollutions of idolatry, fornication, eating of strangled meat or eating of blood. (15:20)

We must be careful not to set up a civil war within the church between the Jews and the gentile converts.”

In essence, James says that while the gentiles are not expected to be Jews, they *are* expected to experience a real conversion and therefore leave their idols and pagan practices at the door.

There is a doctrine today that says we can toss the Old Testament, that it no longer applies. One strand of this false doctrine says that only James’ “four laws” apply to the New Testament church (i.e.: don’t fornicate, worship idols, eat strangled meat or blood; other than that, you’re on your own and can do what you want!).

However, in the New Testament, many of the laws of the Old Testament are *repeated*, and elaborated on as higher laws (i.e.: in the Old Testament: “Do not commit adultery.” But in the New Testament, even looking on a woman to lust after her is adultery of the heart). The New Testament *raises* the bar but gives us grace to stand on so that we may meet the standard.

Acts 16: Paul, Barnabas, Judas Barsabbas & Silas leave on missionary journeys. While in Philippi, they meet Lydia and witness to her and her family. Paul also casts a demonic spirit out of a possessed girl. When her owners realize she no longer has “fortune-telling abilities,” they find Paul & Silas and have them thrown in jail. It is here where the doors to the prison are opened through an earthquake and the prisoners are loosed. The guard and his family are saved as well.

Acts 17: Paul's journeys to Thessalonica, Berea & Athens.

Thessalonica: Most accept the message, but some of the Jews are still upset about the conversions and try to hunt down Paul & Silas.

Berea: The Jews here receive the message, but word gets back to the angry mob in Thessalonica; when they come after Paul, he slips away to Athens, leaving Timothy and Silas in Berea for a time.

Athens: Paul is very angered by all the idol worship here, and he preaches about the one true God; some accept his message, others laugh at the idea of the resurrection.

Acts 18: Paul's journeys to Corinth & Ephesus.

Corinth: Here we meet Aquila & Priscilla, Jews & Christians expelled from Rome under Claudius. Paul preaches to the people here, and even though some Jews don't receive the message, Crispus - the Jew's meeting-place president - does! Even when Paul is attacked by the Jews here, Gallio - governor of this province - simply tells them to solve their Jewish religious issues on their own.

Ephesus: Paul preaches in Ephesus for a time, but then returns to Antioch for a couple years before coming back to Ephesus. Aquila & Priscilla however, stay in Ephesus, where they witness to a man named Apollos, who became a great public debater, convincing many that Jesus was their Messiah.

Acts 19: Paul distinguishes between John's baptism and the plan of salvation for a group of disciples in Ephesus. In addition, many witches and warlocks in Ephesus come to believe in God. Finally, a silversmith named Demetrius stirs up trouble when he reminds the people that the goddess Artemis is worshipped here; who are these Christian men to say that there is no such thing as a god made with hands? But the town clerk quiets them and tells them to settle down, as Rome does not like rioters.

Acts 20: Paul heads out for Macedonia and ends up in Philippi during Passover week. He then ends up in Troas, where Eutychus falls out of a third floor window while Paul is talking (long past midnight!). Eutychus is miraculously healed. Paul heads out for Jerusalem, desiring to be there in time for the Feast of Pentecost. He is compelled to go to Jerusalem, even though he knows it will not be a good thing for him (he'll be arrested or worse). He sends for and tells the leaders of the Ephesus church that this is goodbye and that they must continue to give to those around them and trust in God.

Acts 21: Paul reaches Jerusalem and is indeed arrested when angry Jews realize he is in town. Paul asks to speak to the crowd.

Acts 22: Paul tells his conversion story to the crowd, speaking in Hebrew so they'll listen. He comes to the point where God told him he would be a witness to non-Jews. At this point, the mob becomes angry again, and Paul is taken to the barracks to be whipped; the captain is

determined to understand why the mob is so angry with him. But Paul declares that he is a Roman citizen and that this is unlawful. Since this is indeed true, the captain stops the interrogation. However, the next day, he brings Paul before the high priests and the High Council to see what they make of it.

Acts 23: Paul meets with the council and pits them against each other by speaking of the resurrection of the dead (this was something the Pharisees believed in. However, the Sadducees did not; anything they couldn't "see," they didn't put any stock in). While they argue heatedly over this, the captain takes Paul back to the barracks, fearing that the council may attack Paul violently. That night, Paul hears from God, who says "You will be my witness in Rome!" During this break from the council, the angry Jews (over 40 of them) plot to kill Paul. They plan to ambush Paul on his way to the council the next day. Paul's nephew overhears their plan and tells Paul and the captain keeping Paul imprisoned. The captain determines that he will send two centurions marching - with Paul, 70 cavalry and 200 light infantry - to Caesarea, where Paul will be delivered to Governor Felix unharmed.

Felix greets Paul, determines that he is a Roman citizen, and locks him up in Herod's palace until Paul's accusers arrive. At that point, Felix says, he will take up Paul's case.

Acts 24: Within five days, Paul's accusers arrive and Paul is made to defend himself again. He asserts that he still believes in the same God, and was minding his own business, intending to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem when he was hauled into court. Felix says he will decide his case when Captain Lysias arrives. Paul is kept in custody, but given fairly free run of the place. Two years pass and Felix is replaced by Porcius Festus. Paul remains imprisoned.

Acts 25: Festus travels to Jerusalem shortly after he takes up his duties as governor. The Jews there have renewed their plot to kill Paul and ask Festus that Paul be sent to them. But Festus says Paul will remain in Caesarea under his jurisdiction. He invites them to come there if they wish to accuse Paul.

Festus returns to Caesarea and brings Paul before the mob, who hurl accusations, none of which they can prove. But since Festus wants to get on the good side of the Jews, he suggests that Paul's trial be carried out in Jerusalem. And *then* Paul appeals to Caesar (his right as a Roman citizen). The Caesar he is appealing to is Caesar *Nero*, who is burning Christians alive and feeding them to lions. This means he will be sent to Rome, even though Festus can find no crime to accuse him of. He even asks King Agrippa (who comes to Caesarea to welcome Festus to his new post) what he thinks. Agrippa asks to meet Paul in person.

Acts 26: Paul testifies to Agrippa about his personal experience, asserting that it's only because he's preaching this message to non-Jews that the Jews seek his death. Agrippa is nearly converted by Paul (whom Agrippa believes is entirely innocent).

Acts 27: Paul is put on a ship setting sail for Rome (even though he warns that it is a horrible time for sailing). When they have a shipwreck, Paul says, “You should have listened to me, but oh well...no one will drown here. The ship is lost, but we’ll make it to Rome.”

The port of Caesarea today in Israel. Paul was shipped to Rome from this port.



Acts 28: They swam and drifted to the island of Malta, where Paul is bitten by a poisonous snake but remained alive. Paul has experienced numerous troubles, but he is not troubled by his troubles. The plan of God can be accomplished even if you have trouble.

After three months on Malta, they set sail for Rome on an Egyptian ship. In Rome, Paul is assigned a guard, but lives in private quarters.

He speaks to the Jewish leaders in Rome, again telling of his dilemma. Some believed, some were annoyed by Paul. And Paul remained under house arrest in Rome for the remaining two years of Acts. He is eventually put to death.

Timeline of Letters & Epistles in Relation Chapters of Acts

Galatians: Paul says in this book “We’re saved by faith.” This is written around the time of the church council in chapter 15, so you can see Paul’s defense of this truth.

James: Also written around the time of the church council. James says “You show me your faith without works, but I’ll show you my faith *by* my works.” (James 2:18)

At first glance, it appears that these two are fighting and arguing, but they are actually just talking about two different aspects of salvation.

Paul is talking about the **ROOT** of salvation, while James is talking about the **FRUIT** of salvation.

Paul says, “Before you’re saved, you can’t *DO* enough to get saved. It’s only by the grace of God and faith in Jesus Christ that you can experience salvation.”

And this is true.

But James is also correct when he says, “After you’re saved, you *need to show it*. We delight to do good works for God because of all He has done for us.”

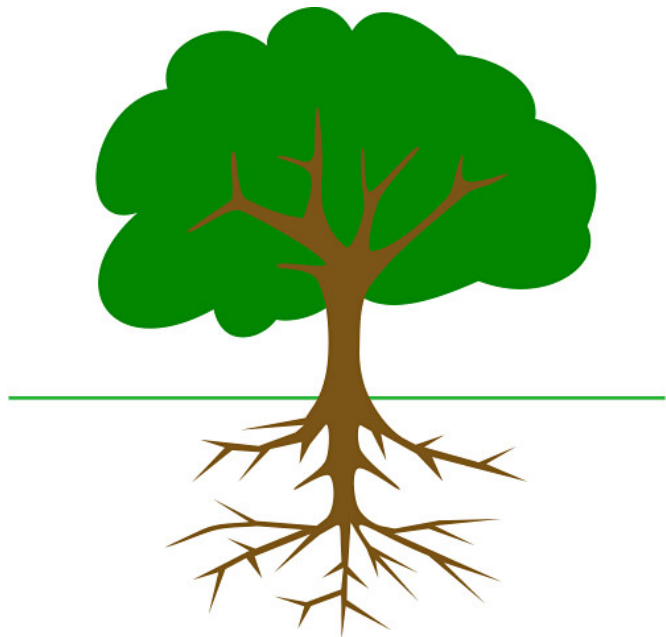
After the church council in chapter 15 of Acts, Paul goes on missionary journeys. Often he will start a church, put leadership in place and go to another place to begin another church. He will frequently write back to the churches he has started (i.e.: “Thessalonians” to the church in Thessalonica, “Corinthians” to the church in Corinth).

Note: Anytime you see two books in the New Testament, it means there was a problem in between. For example:

I Thessalonians: Both of these books are written while he is in Corinth.

Paul writes to say “be ready, look for Jesus to return, stay ready, be ready!”

PROBLEM: They all quit their jobs, don white robes and go to a hillside to sit and wait for the Lord’s return.



II Thessalonians: Paul writes back to say “That’s not what I meant!”

And...

I Corinthians: Written while Paul is in Ephesus, the book of I Corinthians answers questions posed to Paul by the people there.

PROBLEM: When Paul answers their questions, some become indignant, saying, “Who’s Paul to tell us what to do?”

II Corinthians: Written as a defense of Paul’s apostlehood, II Corinthians is penned to say “Here’s who I am to tell you what to do.”

Paul returns to Corinth and there writes the book of Romans. Paul is speaking (in this book) to people he’s never met, but it is his dream to plant a church in Rome. The book of Romans is preparation for that.

At this point (around Acts 20), Paul is directed by God to return to Jerusalem. Of course, Paul and his friends realize that he is the “Judas of Judaism” because he betrayed the Jewish faith when he converted to Christianity. He isn’t liked by the Jews, and if he goes back, he will be arrested or killed by the Sanhedrin/Sadducees/Pharisees.

But he goes anyway (Acts 20:22: And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there), much to the dislike of his friends (they try to make him stay). But Paul realizes that sometimes things in life that aren’t pleasant actually accomplish the will of God.

Acts 20:29: For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men rise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Before he leaves, Paul gives the church two warnings: one about people *outside* the church, but another about people *inside* the church who go astray and lead people down a path of false doctrine.

Acts 21-28: Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested, sent to Caesarea, and finally on to Rome.

During Paul’s time in Rome (Acts 28), he writes Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians while imprisoned. In Philippians 1:12, Paul says, “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the

gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace (Nero's palace, where Paul has converts), and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

Paul also writes "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (Philippians 4:4) during his time in prison. You should always rejoice in the Lord, even in the middle of problems.

Philemon: Paul writes to Philemon, a leader of the Colossian church, to ask him to forgive his (Philemon's) former servant Onesimus. The book of Philemon is about forgiveness.

Ephesians: The theme in Ephesians is "Thank God for this great church/Body of Christ we are a part of. Let's be unified and live for God." Paul details some of the ways the church (as the Body of Christ) should live.

Colossians: This book is written to the church in Colossae. It talks about doctrine and spiritual growth, as well as conduct of believers.

Philippians: This book was written to the church in Philippi. Paul says, "Stay focused on the goal while you live for God." It is a letter of encouragement to a church he's very fond of.

Paul, during his time under house arrest, also writes:

I Timothy: Paul writes this to Timothy, whom he has mentored, getting him prepared for his role as a leader of the church. He instructs him on various "ins and outs" of leading a church.

Titus: Paul writes to Titus, who traveled with him on missionary journeys; he details duties and responsibilities of elders in the church.

II Timothy: Paul is writing to say goodbye; he tells Timothy he's ready to go (I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith - II Timothy 4:7).

Hebrews: In Hebrews, Paul addresses a group of Jewish Christians who are sick of persecution. In order to escape the suffering, they are tempted to return to the safety of the Jewish religion, forsaking Christianity.

Paul says "What?? Why would you consider going backwards? Don't you realized we have a *better* hope, a *better* testament, a *better* covenant, *better* promises, *better* sacrifices, a *better* and enduring substance [in heaven], a *better* resurrection, a *better* mediator, a *better* high priest, etc."

The keyword in Hebrews is "BETTER."

In addition, these books are also written by other authors during this same time:

I Peter: Peter writes to churches suffering persecution in Asia minor to say, “Persecution will come from outside the church, be on guard for it, be encouraged and stay strong, knowing what you believe and how to defend it!”

II Peter: Peter writes back to say, “While you were busy guarding yourselves against persecution and those persecuting you from outside the church, you have allowed false doctrines to rise up *inside* the church. Shake yourselves!”

I John: John writes to say again, “Jesus is God! Walk with him; you’ll be thrilled and so will we. It’s ignorant to think we are free of sin; confess them and God will forgive. And then live it out! Show that you’re saved by loving others (while separating yourself from the world). Don’t get distracted, stay on track, and love like Jesus loved. You’ve got victory and life in Him, so live it out.”

II John: John repeats, “Love one another! Love means following His commandments!”

III John: John writes to Gaius, a pastor friend to tell him to model the love of God to those around him.

Jude: Written by a half brother of Jesus (James & Jude were brothers), Jude talks about living righteously (consider who he grew up with!) because through God we can! Reach for others because that is our purpose; God will keep you from falling over the edge.

Acts ends with Paul imprisoned, and it truly seems that the church is doomed under Nero. But Paul wouldn’t stop and neither did the church.

Acts 28:31: Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, *no man forbidding him*.

The phrase at the end is one word in Greek: *akolutos*. It means “without hinderances, freely.”

“Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, *UNSTOPPABLE*.”

Revelation

Revelation is written by John when John is in his 90s (he may have actually been released from Patmos for a time, and wrote Revelation then). He is the last apostle alive, and is living on the island of Patmos (a Roman penal colony) as a prisoner. He is probably doing hard manual labor in a chain gang.

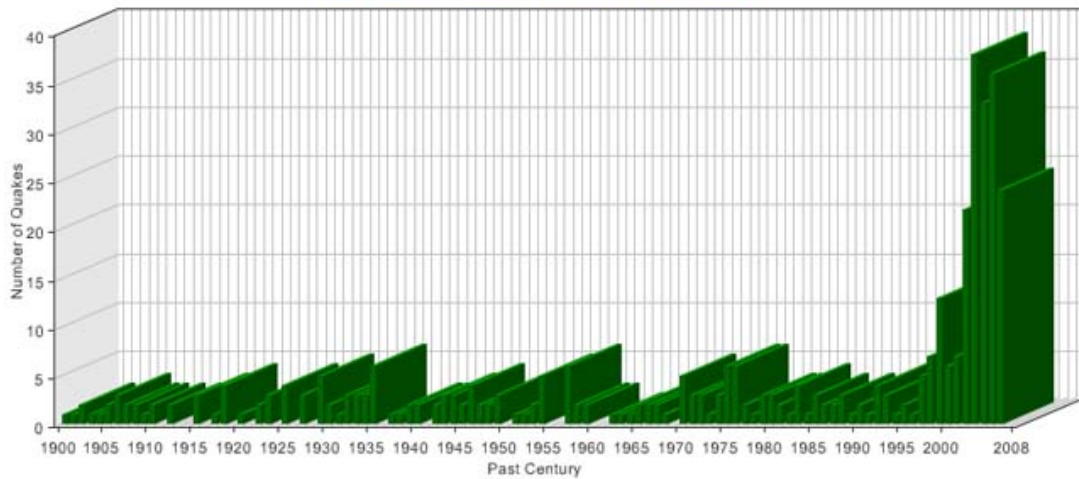
1/30 of the verses in the Bible talk about the end times or Christ's return.

Revelation 1:1: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.

- The word “revelation” in Greek is “apokalupsis,” which indicates the removal of a veil. God inspires John to write about something that is for *this* age, the church age (which we are still in).
- Conversely, in Daniel, God told Daniel to “shut up the words, and seal the book” because the prophetic words were not for Daniel's time/age.
- But to John, God says, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.”
- The word “shortly” here doesn't mean “quickly.” Instead, it means “suddenly.” When the signs of the times start happening, it will snowball, like a woman in labor (the signs of the times become more intense and closer together).

USGS Worldwide Deadly & Destructive Earthquakes between Magnitudes 6 and 8

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/world/historical.php>



- The graph above shows the spike in deadly & destructive earthquakes.
- The words “signified it” mean “symbolized it.” Revelation is written in symbols for a few reasons: one, it protects the first century church (had John written about the Roman emperor by name, the book never would have been read by anyone); two, symbols are not weakened by time (John wouldn’t have been able to write about weapons, but God inspired him to write in a way that both the 1st century and 21st century church could understand). When John speaks of “ten horns,” it’s clear to the first century church that he’s talking about Rome, a city on ten hills.

Revelation 1:3: Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

- The first century church believed the Lord could return any day; we should still believe this with sincerity.

John had seen great revival; John had been used of God. He also saw the trials of the first century church. He had seen all his friends and the apostles killed. In Revelation 10:1, John says “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.” Those words - “The Lord’s Day” - were not used in the New Testament time; they simply called Sunday the first day of the week. “The Lord’s Day” is an Old Testament term. John was talking about a day when the Lord would reign, set wrongs right, a time when the church is victorious and God comes to earth in all his glory. While John was in a horrible situation, he saw the end.

Right now he knows the church is under the heel of Rome. But he writes to say, at the end of this, we'll all be together forever; the church is the Bride of Christ and it's going to be worth it all when Jesus comes back!!

The message of Revelation is that the Devil, Antichrist, False Prophet, etc. will try to do their worst...but the church prevails and WE WIN!

When John closes Revelation, he tries to find an accurate way to describe our future, and heaven; but he can't. Instead, he tells us a bit about what heaven is not.

No more curse
No night
No death
No suffering
No pain

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.