

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

The entire Bible is a single narrative with several chapters. What we used to see as separate books actually comprise just One Book – the Book of God’s Story. There are four main themes of the Bible narrative - - - CREATION, THE FALL, REDEMPTION, and CONSUMMATION. The Creation part of the story is narrated in Genesis 1-2, but can also be found echoed in other parts of the narrative.

The Fall of man begins in Genesis 3 and the long tragic story continues almost to the very end in Revelations 22:11,15. Man’s rejection of God had three terrible consequences:

1. We lost our *vision of God* with regard to His nature and character.
2. We distort and blur the *divine image* in ourselves.
3. We lost the *divine presence* and broke our fellowship with God.

The longest chapter in the narrative is God’s Redemption of mankind. The holy and just God, is also a God full of mercy and love – and faithfulness. Right after the Fall, God already outlined His plan for redeeming mankind and it continues to his choosing of Abraham through whom and His offspring, will be a blessing to the nations, of Moses through whom the Law was given to make Israel His distinct people, and so on. The story tells us that we deserve nothing but get everything; we deserve hell but we get heaven; we deserve to be wiped out but we receive His tender embrace; we deserve rejection and judgment but get the right of becoming His children, to bear His likeness, to call Him Father.

The final chapter is still being fulfilled in the Consummation of all that is. What God has already set in motion through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit is finally going to be realized. The final wrap-up of the story is narrated in Revelations 21-22.

Each Book in the Bible should not be looked at as a separate book but a chapter in the whole narrative – God’s narrative of Himself and of man.

OLD TESTAMENT	CONTENT SUMMARY
Genesis	<p>The story of the creation, of human disobedience and its tragic consequences, and of God’s choosing Abraham and his offspring – the beginning of the story of redemption.</p> <p>Covered the period from creation to the death of Joseph in Egypt around 1600 BC (?).</p> <p>Emphasizes on God as the Creator of all that is; God’s creation of human beings in His image; the nature and consequences of human disobedience; the beginning of the divine covenants; God’s choice of a people through whom He will bless the nations.</p>
Exodus	<p>Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, her constitution as a people through covenant law, and instructions</p>

	<p>for and construction of the Tabernacle – the place of God’s presence.</p> <p>Period covered from Joseph’s death around 1600 BC (?) to Israel’s encampment at Sinai either 1440 or 1260 BC.</p> <p>Emphasizes on God’s miraculous rescue of Israel from Egypt through Moses; covenant law given at Mount Sinai; the Tabernacle as the place of God’s presence and Israel’s proper worship; God’s revelation of Himself and His character; Israel’s tendency to complain and rebel against God; God’s judgment and mercy toward His people when they rebel.</p>
Leviticus	<p>Various laws having to do with holiness before God and with love of neighbour, including sacrifices, ritual cleanness, and social obligations, as well as laws for the Levites regarding their priestly duties.</p> <p>Emphasizes getting it right with regard to worship for both people and priests; institution of the priesthood under Aaron; laws protecting ritual cleanness, including atonement for sins; laws regulating sexual relations, family life, punishments for major crimes, festivals, and special years.</p>
Numbers	<p>The Israelites’ long stay in the desert as they journey from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab, with supplemental covenant laws.</p> <p>Coverage is forty years within which the generation that left Egypt died off.</p> <p>Emphasizes on preparation for military conquest of the promised land; God’s covenant loyalty toward Israel with regard to the land; Israel’s repeated failure to keep covenant with God; God’s leadership of His people and affirmation of Moses’ leadership; preparations for entering and worshipping in the promised land; conquest and settlement of the land east of the Jordan River.</p>
Deuteronomy	<p>Rehearsal of the covenant for a new generation of Israelites just before the conquest.</p> <p>Covers a period during the final weeks east of the</p>

	<p>Jordan.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the oneness and uniqueness of Yahweh, the God of Israel, over against all other gods; Yahweh's covenant love for Israel in making them His people; Yahweh's universal sovereignty over all peoples; Israel as Yahweh's model for the nations; the significance of the central sanctuary where Yahweh is to be worshipped; Yahweh's rough his character; the blessings of obedience and the dangers of disobedience.</p>
Joshua	<p>The partial conquest, the distribution, and settlement of the promised land.</p> <p>Coverage is from beginning of the conquest to the death of Joshua.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the engagement of the holy war, as God through His people repeatedly defeats the idolatrous Canaanites; the gift of the land to God's people, thus fulfilling His covenant promise to the patriarchs; Israel's need for continuing covenant faithfulness to the one true God.</p>
Judges	<p>The cyclical narrative of the time of the judges, with emphasis on Israel's repeated lack of covenant loyalty.</p> <p>Covers from the death of Joshua to the beginning of the monarchy.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the tenuous results of the conquest; God's constant rescue of His people, despite their habitual failure to keep covenant with Him; the desperate conditions and overall downward spiral during this period; the need for a good king.</p>
1 and 2 Samuel	<p>The transition from the last judge, Samuel, to the first king, Saul; the rise and reign of David.</p> <p>Covers from Samuel's birth around 1100 BC to the end of David's kingship in 970 BC.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the beginning of kingship in Israel; the concern over kingship and covenant loyalty; the Ark of the Covenant as representing God's presence; the choice of Jerusalem as the "City of David"; the Davidic Covenant with its Messianic overtones; David's adultery and its consequences.</p>

<p>1 and 2 Kings</p>	<p>Starting with the reign of Solomon, the story of the decline and eventual dissolution of the monarchy in Israel and the expulsion of God's people from the land.</p> <p>Covers from the death of David in 970 BC to the sixth century exile of Judah in 586 BC.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the evaluation of the monarchy on the basis of covenant loyalty; the fateful national consequences of disloyalty to Yahweh, reform the resulting finally in the expulsion from the land; the schism and civil wars between north and south; the rise of superpowers that, under the direction of God, subjugated Israel and Judah; the role of prophets who speak for God in Israel's national life.</p>
<p>1 and 2 Chronicles</p>	<p>A post-exilic, positive history of Judah's kings, with emphasis on the Temple and its worship.</p> <p>An opening genealogy goes back to Adam; the narrative itself covers the kingdom of Judah from David about 1000 BC to the decree of Cyrus around 539/8 BC.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the continuity of the people of Judah (and others) through the exile and beyond; David's and Solomon's covenant loyalty as models for the time of restoration; true worship as a matter of the heart and full of joy and song; divine blessing and rest for obedience, and retribution for disobedience.</p>
<p>Ezra-Nehemiah</p>	<p>Rebuilding and reform in post-exilic Judah through the latter half of the fifth century BC.</p> <p>Covers the period from the first return around 539/8 BC to the end of the 5th century, but especially from 458 to 430 BC, during the reign of Artaxerxes of Persia.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the successful completion of the second Temple despite opposition; successful rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem despite opposition; the crisis of intermarriage and national identity; concern for covenant renewal and reform, based on the law, among the exiles who had returned to Jerusalem.</p>
<p>Esther</p>	<p>The story of God's providential preservation of</p>

	<p>Jews throughout the Persian Empire through Mordecai and his niece, Esther.</p> <p>Most of the story takes place during a single year during the reign of Xerxes from 486-465 BC, a generation before the events recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah.</p> <p>Emphasizes on God’s providential care of the Jews in a context of a pogrom against them; Jewish remembrance of their survival through the Feast of Purim.</p>
Job	<p>Brilliant wrestling of the issue of suffering of the righteous and the justice of God, while also speaking to the larger question, “Where is wisdom found?”</p> <p>The story takes place in the period of the patriarchs; various suggestions have been offered regarding the composition itself.</p> <p>Emphasizes that wisdom is ultimately found in God alone; human wisdom cannot on its own fathom the ways of God; undeserved suffering has no easy answer; God is not obligated to fallen human beings to explain all things; the fear of the Lord is the path to true wisdom.</p>
Psalms	<p>150 Psalms of rich diversity, which in their present arrangement served as the “hymnbook” for post-exilic (Second Temple) Judaism.</p> <p>The Psalms themselves date from the early monarchy to a time after the exile about 1000-400 BC; the collection in its present form may be part of the reform movement reflected in Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah.</p> <p>Emphasis is on trust and praise to Yahweh for His goodness; lament over wickedness and injustices; Yahweh as King of the Universe and the nations; Israel’s king as Yahweh’s representative in Israel; Israel (and individual Israelites) as God’s covenant people; Zion (and its temple) as the special place of Yahweh’s presence on earth.</p>
Proverbs	<p>A series of opening poems praising wisdom and warning against folly, followed by several collections of proverbs from sages who taught wisdom to Israel, starting with Solomon.</p>

	<p>These are collections of proverbs originating with Solomon, various wise men, Agur, and Lemuel's mother – gathered and arranged for later generations by someone otherwise unknown.</p> <p>Emphasizes that wisdom begins with the fear of and trust in Yahweh; at the practical level, it consists of making wise choices between good and evil behaviour; such wisdom is to be desired above all else in order to live a full and godly life.</p>
Ecclesiastes	<p>The ponderings of a Wisdom teacher who wrestles with life's realities; what is to be gained by achieving wealth or wisdom when in the end, death claims both rich and poor, wise and foolish; but especially set in the context of knowing the fear of God.</p> <p>Date of composition is unknown; scholarly guesses cover a broad range.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the transitory nature of the present life; how to live wisely in a world where the only certainty is death and judgment; the futility of human pursuits that do not take the fear of God into account.</p>
Song of Songs	<p>A love poem of several episodes, celebrating the sexual love between a man and a woman.</p> <p>Date of composition is unknown; scholarly guesses cover a broad range.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the proper love of a woman and a man for one another; the unquenchable nature of pure love; the delight in and longing for each other that pure love engenders.</p>
Lamentations	<p>A series of five laments over the fall of Jerusalem.</p> <p>Date of composition is unknown, probably soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>Emphasizes on the deep personal suffering and spiritual agony experienced at the fall of Jerusalem; the justice of God in carrying out the overthrow of Zion; hope finally lies in God's character alone.</p>
	<p>Yahweh's sovereign majesty and redemptive love, revealed in His dealings with His chosen people,</p>

	<p>the Israelites, who are destined for both judgment and salvation, in which the nations will also be included.</p> <p>The prophet is Isaiah of Jerusalem.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is from about 740 to 687 BC.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the holiness, majesty, and righteousness of Yahweh; the compassion and saving mercy of Yahweh; the central role of Israel in Yahweh's plans for the nations and the world; the central role of Zion in these plans; the redemptive role of God's suffering Servant; the glorious final future God has in store for those who are His.</p>
Jeremiah	<p>Oracles of judgment against Judah and the nations, along with oracles of future hope, interwoven with narratives of Jeremiah's role in the concluding days of Judah.</p> <p>The prophet Jeremiah is of priestly lineage from the village of Anathoth, about three miles south of Jerusalem.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is from 627 to 585 BC.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Judah's unfaithfulness to Yahweh will end in its destruction; in keeping with the promises of Deuteronomy, God has a bright future for His people – a time of restoration and a new covenant; Yahweh's own heart for His people revealed through the heart of Jeremiah.</p>
Ezekiel	<p>A series of prophecies announcing the fall of Jerusalem, including the departure of Yahweh, followed by Israel's eventual restoration with the return of Yahweh.</p> <p>The prophet Ezekiel is an Israelite priest and prophet who was taken to Babylon among the first wave of captives from Judah in 589 BC, and a younger contemporary of Jeremiah.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is from 593 until 571 BC.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the inevitability of the fall of Jerusalem because of her sins, especially idolatry;</p>

	<p>the transcendent sovereignty of God as Lord of all the nations and all history; the loss and restoration of the land and of Yahweh's presence among the people of God; the promise of the life-giving Spirit as the key to covenant faithfulness.</p>
Daniel	<p>A series of stories about how God brings honor to Himself through Daniel and his three friends in Babylon, followed by four apocalyptic visions about future kingdoms and God's final kingdom.</p> <p>The prophet Daniel is one of the early exiles to Babylon, who was selected to serve as a provincial administrator in the Babylonian, and finally the Persian court.</p> <p>Date of composition is unknown, presumably toward the end of the sixth century around 520 BC although many have suggested it dates from the early second century BC around 165 BC.</p>
Hosea	<p>Yahweh's compassion for the Northern Kingdom (Israel), yet His condemnation of them for their unfaithfulness to Him.</p> <p>The prophet Hosea is a northern prophet, probably from Samaria.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is from about 758 to 722 BC.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Yahweh's unfailing love for His people, even when he must punish them for their unfaithfulness.</p>
Joel	<p>A devastating locust plague sets the stage for a two-fold summons to repentance, to which God responds with a promise of mercy and an outpouring of His Spirit, with a day of judgment on the nations.</p> <p>The prophet Joel is otherwise unknown; his concern for Judah and Jerusalem suggests that he was from the southern kingdom (Judah).</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is uncertain; perhaps around 590 BC, but possibly after 500 BC.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the impending day of Yahweh – a day of judgment and salvation; Yahweh chasten those He loves, and His chastening calls His people</p>

	<p>to repentance; Israel's God keeps covenant by showing mercy to His people; Yahweh is sovereign over all the nations and will judge those who have shown no mercy to His people.</p>
Amos	<p>In a period of rare economic prosperity and political strength for Israel, Yahweh announces their doom because she has failed to keep covenant with Him.</p> <p>The prophet Amos is a shepherd/farmer from Tekoa, south of Bethlehem in Judah.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is around 760 BC, for an apparently brief period (at the peak of the reign of Jeroboam II in Samaria (793-753 BC) and Uzziah in Jerusalem (792-740 BC).</p> <p>Emphasis is Yahweh is God over all the nations and the whole universe; Yahweh will bring utter ruin to Israel for her covenant disloyalty; syncretistic religion is anathema to Yahweh; Yahweh requires justice for the innocent and mercy for the poor; religious observances are no substitute for doing good and showing mercy.</p>
Obadiah	<p>A doom oracle against Edom for taking advantage of (probably) the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 588-586 BC.</p> <p>Obadiah is a prophet from Judah.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is probably just after the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC?).</p> <p>Emphasis is on God's judgment on Edom for her sins against God's people; the defeat of those who think themselves unconquerable; Israel's deliverance and restoration on the day of the Lord.</p>
Jonah	<p>Through a very reluctant prophet, God shows compassion for one of Israel's hated enemies.</p> <p>The prophet is Jonah, son of Amittai, who prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Yahweh as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all; Yahweh's compassionate concern for the Gentiles (represented by Nineveh); Israel's reluctance (represented by Jonah) to acknowledge Yahweh's compassion for the nations.</p>

<p>Micah</p>	<p>Alternating oracles of doom on Israel and Judah for their idolatry and social injustices and of future hope because of Yahweh's mercies.</p> <p>The prophet Micah is a Judean prophet from Moresheth, a town about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is some length of time between the accession of Jotham (740 BC) and the death of Hezekiah (686 BC).</p> <p>Emphasis is on the threat of divine judgment for breaking covenant with Yahweh; Yahweh as a God of justice and mercy who pleads the cause of the poor and requires His people to do the same; after judgment Yahweh will restore Jerusalem through the promised Davidic King; Yahweh as God of all the nations.</p>
<p>Nahum</p>	<p>A prophecy of God's judgment against Nineveh (Assyria) for her oppression, cruelty, and idolatry, concluding with the announced destruction of the city.</p> <p>The prophet Nahum is from Judah, who is otherwise unknown (even his hometown is uncertain).</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is sometime before the fall of Nineveh in 62 BC, during the period of Judah's being a vassal to Assyria.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Yahweh's sovereignty over all the nations; Yahweh's execution of justice against cruelty; Yahweh's overthrow of the arrogant who think of themselves as eternal.</p>
<p>Habakkuk</p>	<p>Habakkuk enters into dialogue with God over the question of injustice (how do people get away with evil and God seems to do nothing?) and receives grounds for trust.</p> <p>The prophet Habakkuk is a prophet of Judah, and is unknown apart from this book.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is sometime between 612 and 599 BC, when the Babylonian had begun to dominate the international scene, but before she had attacked Jerusalem.</p>

	<p>Emphasis is on prophetic indignation over god's apparent tolerance of injustice; prophetic confidence in the injustice and power of God; the stance of the righteous is faithfulness and trust in God; God's assurance that the wicked will be punished.</p>
<p>Zephaniah</p>	<p>Oracles of the coming catastrophic judgments against Jerusalem (Judah) and surrounding nations, plus an oracle of restoration for a remnant of Judah.</p> <p>The prophet Zephaniah is from Jerusalem, possibly of the royal lineage of Hezekiah.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is sometime during the reign of Josiah of Judah (640-609 BC).</p> <p>Emphasis is on the coming day of Yahweh; judgment against Judah for her sins; Yahweh as God of all the nations; eventual salvation of a remnant of Judah.</p>
<p>Haggai</p>	<p>Four oracles encouraging God's people to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.</p> <p>The prophet Haggai is a post-exilic prophet in Jerusalem and contemporary of Zechariah.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is a four-month period during the second year of the reign of Darius of Persia (520 BC).</p> <p>Emphasizes that God's people need to rebuild the Temple as the place of God's presence and of their worship; current hardships stem from failure in this matter; a glorious future awaits the people of God and Zerubbabel (David's kingly line).</p>
<p>Zechariah</p>	<p>Visions aimed at encouraging the post-exilic community, especially the leadership, to rebuild the Temple, plus oracles about the future coming King who would be slain and eventually triumph.</p> <p>The prophet is Zechariah of Jerusalem, a contemporary of Haggai, but with a longer known ministry.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is from 520 BC until sometime in the early 400 BC.</p>

	<p>Emphasizes that God is with the remnant community of people who have returned from exile; God will prosper her leaders; the future of Jerusalem and Judah is bright and full of peace and glory; Israel's King will come back to Jerusalem in triumph, yet He will be slain for the sins of the people; God will punish His people's enemies, yet many of the nations will come to know the Lord.</p>
Malachi	<p>In six disputes with His people, Yahweh warns them of future judgments and promises redemption to the faithful.</p> <p>The prophet Malachi ("my messenger") is otherwise unknown.</p> <p>Date of prophetic activity is unknown, perhaps around 460 BC, just before the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.</p> <p>Emphasizes that Yahweh is a covenant-keeping God and requires the same of His people; God's people show disdain for God by their apathy and moral and religious decline; God will judge His people in justice for their half-hearted obedience.</p>
NEW TESTAMENT	
Matthew	<p>Written particularly to the Jews. Emphasizes Jesus as King of the Jews, on the Church & Government. The Gospel to be preached to all nations, people groups. Preached by pastor. Work is to teach. Response is submission. Call to discipleship: Lordship.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed by Papias (AD 125) to the apostle Matthew. Date of writing is uncertain but could be between 70-80 AD.</p>
Mark	<p>Written especially to the Romans. Emphasizes Jesus as Priest, and the Gospel. Preach to every person. Preached by an evangelist. Work is to preach. Response is sacrifice. Call to discipleship: Death.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed by Papias (AD 125) to John</p>

	<p>Mark, sometime companion of Paul and later of Peter.</p> <p>Date of writing is around AD 65, according to Papias, soon after the deaths of Paul and Peter in Rome.</p>
Luke	<p>Written particularly to the Greeks. Emphasizes Jesus as Prophet, and witness. Preach to every place. Preached by believer. Work is to reach. Response is service. Call to discipleship: Forsake.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed Luke the Physician, sometime companion of Paul, the only Gentile author in the Bible.</p> <p>Date of writing could be between AD 64 before the death of Paul, to AD 70 after the fall of Jerusalem.</p>
John	<p>Written to the whole world. Emphasizes Jesus as God, and discipleship. Preach to the world. Preached by disciple. Work is to reproduce. Response is faith. Call to discipleship: Obey.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to the beloved disciple, John, son of Zebedee.</p> <p>Date of writing is probably between AD 90-95.</p> <p>Considered by many Christian scholars as one of the four doctrinal books of the Bible.</p>
Acts	<p>Part 2 of Luke's account of the good news about Jesus; how by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Good News spread from Jerusalem to Rome.</p> <p>The author is Luke the physician, same author of the Gospel of Luke.</p> <p>Emphasizes that the Good News of God's salvation through Jesus is for Jew and Gentile alike, thus fulfilling Old Testament expectations; the Holy Spirit guides the Church in spreading the Good</p>

	<p>News; the Church has the good sense to side with God regarding His salvation and the inclusion of the Gentiles; salvation for all is God's thing and nothing can hinder it; the Good news is accepted in joy by some and rejected in anger by others.</p>
Romans	<p>Chief doctrinal book that explains the Gospel, basis of salvation, and should be mastered by a serious disciple.</p> <p>Except for John, the other Gospel books did not explain the Gospel, and Old Testament passages are only foreshadows.</p> <p>Every question that man has in his heart about himself and about God finds an answer in Romans, if he is willing to believe.</p> <p>Written by Paul around AD 57 from Corinth.</p>
1 Corinthians	<p>A letter of correction, in which Paul stands over against the Corinthians on many issues, mostly behavioural, but which are nevertheless betrayals of the Gospel of Christ and the life in the Spirit.</p> <p>Written by Paul around AD 53-54 from Ephesus.</p> <p>Emphasizes a crucified Messiah as the central message of the Gospel; the cross as God's wisdom and power; Christian behaviour that conforms to the Gospel; the true nature of life in the Spirit; the future bodily resurrection of the Christian who died.</p>
2 Corinthians	<p>Probably two letters (chapters 1-9; 10-13) combined into one, dealing primarily with Paul's tenuous relationship with the Corinthian church and in the process touching on several other matters as well (Paul's ministry, the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, and some Jewish Christian itinerants who have invaded the church).</p> <p>Author is Paul, joined by Timothy, written around AD 54-55, from Macedonia, most likely Philippi.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Christian ministry as servanthood, reflecting that of Christ; the greater glory of the new covenant in contrast to the old; the glory of the Gospel exhibited in the weakness of its ministers; the Gospel as reconciliation; giving to the poor as an expression of generosity, not of obligation.</p>
Galatians	<p>A heated argument with the (Gentile) Galatian</p>

	<p>believers against some Jewish Christian “missionaries” who insist that Gentiles be circumcised if they are to be included in the people of God.</p> <p>The author is Paul, joined by “all the brothers and sisters” with him (1:2).</p> <p>Written around AD 55, although some scholars think as early as AD 47-48, with no indication of place of origin.</p> <p>Emphasis is that Paul’s apostleship and the Gospel come directly from God the Father and Christ, not through human mediation; the death of Jesus has brought an end to ethnic religious observances; the Spirit produces the righteousness the law could not; the Spirit enables believers not to yield to sinful desires; one receives the Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus.</p>
Ephesians	<p>A letter of encouragement and exhortation, set against the backdrop of “the powers”, portraying Christ’s bringing the Jew and Gentile together into the one people of God as His ultimate triumph and glory.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to the apostle Paul. Written around AD 61-62 probably from Rome.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the cosmic scope of Christ; Christ’s reconciliation of Jew and Gentile through the cross; Christ’s supremacy over “the powers” for the sake of the Church; Christian behaviour that reflects the unity of the Spirit.</p>
Philippians	<p>Paul’s thanksgiving for, encouragement of, and exhortation to the suffering community of believers in Philippi, who are also experiencing some internal struggles.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul joined by Timothy. Written around AD 62, almost certainly from Rome.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Paul’s and the Philippian’s partnership in the Gospel; Christ as the key to all of life, from beginning to end; knowing Christ, by becoming like Him in His death (sacrificing oneself for others); rejoicing in Christ even in suffering;</p>

	<p>unity through humility and love; the certainty and pursuit of the final prize.</p>
Colossians	<p>A letter encouraging relatively new believers to continue in the truth of Christ they have received, and warning them against outside religious influences.</p> <p>Authorship attributed to Paul, joined by Timothy. Written around AD 61-62, probably in Rome.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the absolute supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ, the Son of God; that Christ both forgives sin and removes one from the terrors of “the powers”; religious rules and regulations count for nothing, but ethical life that bears God’s own image counts for everything; Christ-like living affects relationships of all kinds.</p>
1 Thessalonians	<p>A letter of thanksgiving, encouragement, exhortation, and information for very recent Gentile believers in Christ.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul, joined by his travelling companions Silas and Timothy. Written around AD 50-51 while Paul is in Corinth, probably the earliest document in the New Testament.</p> <p>Emphasis is on Paul’s loving concern for his friends in Thessalonica; suffering as part of Christian life; holiness regarding sexual matters; the need to do one’s own work and not live of the largesse of others; the resurrection of the Christian dead; readiness for Christ’s coming.</p>
2 Thessalonians	<p>A letter of further encouragement in the face of suffering, of warning against being misled sure regarding the coming of the Lord, and of exhortation for some to work with their own hands and not sponge off others.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul, joined by his travelling companions Silas and Timothy. Written around AD 51, very shortly after 1 Thessalonians.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the sure salvation of the Thessalonian believers and the sure judgment of their persecutors; the day of the Lord ahead and will be preceded by “the rebellion”; those who are</p>

	<p>idle and disruptive should work for their food.</p>
1 Timothy	<p>An indictment of some false teachers – their character and teachings – with instruction on various community matters these teachers have brought to crisis, interspersed with words of encouragement to Timothy.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul. Written around AD 62-63 from Macedonia, probably Philippi or Thessalonica, apparently after his expected release from imprisonment noted in Philippians 1:13 and 2:23-24.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the truth of the Gospel as God’s mercy shown toward all people; character qualifications for church leadership; speculative teachings, ascetism, and love of controversy and money disqualify one from church leadership; Timothy, by holding fast to the Gospel, should model genuine Christian character and leadership.</p>
2 Timothy	<p>An appeal to Timothy to remain loyal to Christ, to the Gospel, and to Paul, including a final salvo at the false teachers.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul. Written around AD 64, from a prison in Rome.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the saving work of Christ, “who has destroyed death and brought life ... through the Gospel”; loyalty to Christ by perseverance in suffering and hardship; loyalty to Paul by recalling their long-time relationship; loyalty to the Gospel by being faithful in proclaiming/teaching “the Word” ; the deadly spread, but final demise, of the false teaching; the final salvation of those who are Christ’s.</p>
Titus	<p>Instructions to Titus for setting in order the church(es) on Crete, including the appointment of qualified elders and the instruction of various social groups, set against the backdrop of some false teachers.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul. Written around AD 62-63 apparently from Macedonia at about the same time as 1 Timothy.</p> <p>Emphasis is God’s people must be and do good – this is especially of church leaders; the Gospel of</p>

	<p>grace stands over against false teachings based on the Jewish law.</p>
Philemon	<p>The sole purpose of this letter is to secure forgiveness for a probably runaway slave named Onesimus.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Paul, joined in by Timothy. Written around AD 60-61.</p> <p>Emphasis is the Gospel reconciles people to one another, not only Jew (Paul) and Gentile (Philemon), but also runaway slave and master, making them all brothers.</p>
Hebrews	<p>A “word of exhortation” sent in letter form, encouraging faithful perseverance in light of the superlative final word God has spoken in Christ.</p> <p>Author is unknown, second-generation believer (2:3), who was a skilled preacher and interpreter of Scripture, with an excellent command of Greek. This was included in the canon among Paul’s letters.</p> <p>Date of writing is unknown, probably from AD 50 to 90, but probably before AD 70, since no hint was given that the Temple has been destroyed.</p> <p>Emphasis is God has spoken His final word in His Son; to abandon Christ is to abandon God altogether; Christ is superior to everything that went before – the old revelation, its angelic mediators, the first Exodus (Moses and Joshua), and the whole priestly system; god’s people can have full confidence in God’s Son, the perfect High Priest, who gives all people ready access to God.</p>
James	<p>A treatise composed of short moral essays, emphasizing endurance in hardship and responsible Christian living, with special concern that believers practice what they preach and live together in harmony.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to James, the brother of Jesus, who led the church in Jerusalem for many years.</p> <p>Date of writing is anywhere from the mid AD 40 to AD 90, but most probably in the earlier range.</p>

	<p>Emphasis is on practical faith on the part of believers; joy and patience in the midst of trials; the nature of true (Christian) wisdom; attitudes of the rich toward the poor; abuse and proper use of the tongue.</p>
1 Peter	<p>A letter of encouragement to Christians undergoing suffering, instructing them how to respond Christianly to their persecutors and urging them to live lives worthy of their calling.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to Peter; said to be written by Silas (5:12), the sometime companion of Paul.</p> <p>Written around AD 64-65 from Rome.</p> <p>Emphasizes that suffering for the sake of righteousness should not surprise us; believers should submit to unjust suffering the way Christ did; Christ suffered on our behalf to free us from sin; God's people should live righteously at all times, but especially in the face of hostility; our hope for the future is based on the certainty of Christ's resurrection.</p>
2 Peter	<p>A "farewell speech" sent as a letter, urging Christian growth and perseverance in light of some false teachers who both deny the second coming of Christ and live boldly in sin.</p> <p>Authorship is generally attributed to the apostle Peter.</p> <p>Written around AD 64.</p> <p>Emphasis is on concern that God's people grow in and exhibit godliness; the sure judgment on the false teachers for their ungodly living; the certainty of the Lord's coming, despite the scoffing of the false teachers.</p>
1 John	<p>A treatise that offers assurance to some specific believers, encouraging their loyalty to Christian faith and practice – in response to some false prophets who have left the community.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to the apostle John.</p> <p>Date of writing is unknown but most probably toward the end of the first century (late 80s or early 90s).</p> <p>Emphasis is that Jesus who came in the flesh is the Son of God; that Jesus showed God's love for us through His incarnation and crucifixion; that true believers love one another as God loved them in Christ; that God's children do not habitually sin,</p>

	<p>but when we do sin, we receive forgiveness; that believers can have full confidence in the God who loves them; that by trusting in Christ we now have eternal life.</p>
2 John	<p>“The elder” warns against false teachers who deny the incarnation of Christ.</p> <p>Author is the apostle John. Date of writing is probably towards the end of the first century AD. Same emphasis as in 1 John.</p>
3 John	<p>According to the New Testament scholar Archibald Hunter, 3 John is all about “the Elder, who wrote it; Gaius who received it; Diotrephes who provoked it; and Demetrius, who carried it.”</p> <p>Author is the apostle John. Date of writing is around AD 90. Emphasis is on the obligations of Christian hospitality, especially toward approved itinerant ministers.</p>
Jude	<p>Pastoral letter of exhortation, full of strong warnings against some false teachers who have “secretly slipped in” among them.</p> <p>The author is Jude, who modestly describes himself as “the brother of James” (thus of Jesus). Probably written after AD 70. Emphasizes on the certain judgment on those who live carelessly and teach others to do so; the importance of holy living; God’s love for and preservation of His faithful ones.</p>
The Revelation	<p>A Christian prophecy cast in apocalyptic style and imagery and finally put in letter form, dealing primarily with tribulation (suffering) and salvation for God’s people and God’s wrath (judgment) on the Roman Empire.</p> <p>Authorship is attributed to the apostle John. Written around AD 95.</p> <p>Emphasizes that, despite appearances to the contrary, God is in absolute control of history; although God’s people are destined for suffering in the present, God’s sure salvation belongs to them; God’s judgment will come on those responsible for the Church’s suffering; in the end God will restore what was lost or distorted at the beginning (Genesis 1-3).</p>