

THEMES OF THE BIBLE BOOKS

A Summary of Each Book of the Bible

THE OLD TESTAMENT

PENTATEUCH (Next 5 Bible Books)



Genesis - [50 Chapters](#)

Genesis explains how everything began. In fact, the Bible is the *only* sacred book that accurately does so. Genesis explains how God created the universe, including all the animals and humans. It describes the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It includes a good narrative of human history up to the time of the Jewish exile in Egypt. There are some lists of family trees, generally lasting a page or so, which are mostly of interest to scholars.

Note: You do not have to believe the Bible just because we say so—the Bible has been proven to be true..



Exodus - [40 Chapters](#)

Exodus explains how God, using Moses as his earthly commander-in-chief, freed the Jews from the Egyptian pharaoh using ten plagues. This book includes the famous climax of the Jewish escape the **crossing of the Red Sea**. The book then describes the people's wanderings and rebellious nature, and how the **Ten Commandments** came to be. The book concludes with a detailed description of the making of the first temple of worship. Readers should not be concerned if they do not understand all of the descriptions in this scholarly "temple" section.



Leviticus - [27 Chapters](#)

The book of Leviticus contains a lot of information. The topics include instructions for various ceremonies and holidays, allowed/forbidden behavior (and the penalties for disobedience), sacrifices, priest's duties, dealing with various diseases, and property rights. However, many of these instructions only applied under the "Old Covenant" with God (covered in the Old Testament part of the Bible) and no longer apply under the "New Covenant" (covered in the New Testament part of the Bible). Since many of these instructions no longer apply, you may wish to put off reading Leviticus until you have read all the New Testament books.



Numbers - [36 Chapters](#)

Numbers is a combination of an ancient census and job description for God's people more than 3,000 years ago. Although early chapters are not easy reading, the book becomes a historical adventure starting in Chapter 10. (If you just glance at the first 9 chapters the first time you read this book, we won't tell anybody.)



Deuteronomy- [34 Chapters](#)

Moses, now an old man, summarizes the history of the Jewish nation. Joshua is chosen as Moses' successor to lead the people into the "promised land" they have been looking forward to settling in for forty years.

HISTORICAL BOOKS (Next 12 Bible Books)



Joshua - [24 Chapters](#)

Joshua is a book of war and conquest, including the famous attack on the **city of Jericho**. Anyone who thinks that followers of the Bible are limp-wristed sissies, has not read this book! After the military victories, the land is divided between the tribes of people.

We suggest reading Joshua early in your program, but when you get to the chapters about the division of land, just read them quickly to get an idea what happened. After reading the whole Bible, you can return and study this section with a map of ancient Israel (and some patience) if you want to understand it better.



Judges - [21 Chapters](#)

The violence and intrigue in the book of Judges makes it read somewhat like today's newspaper! Showing just how far some people can fall morally, **the mere fact that these awful events are recorded** add proof that the Bible is not an edited book.

You may recognize a number of famous names and stories in this book—including the adventures of Samson.



Ruth - [4 Chapters](#)

Taking place during the time of the book of Judges, Ruth is the story of a beautiful young widow who comes to Israel from a foreign land.

A very popular story, this is a book anyone can read in a half-hour.



1 Samuel - [31 Chapters](#)

The scrolls of long ago could only hold so much handwritten information before they became too big to handle. The book of Samuel was one of these books, so it was divided into two parts: First and Second Samuel.

First Samuel includes a number of famous stories, including that of **David and Goliath**.



2 Samuel – [24 Chapters](#)

In Second Samuel, David is now king—but there is a great deal of trouble brewing. If you thought everyone in the Bible was perfect, you have not read the book of 2 Samuel, for sure. There is enough murder, adultery and intrigue in this book (and all historically true, of course) to put a soap opera to shame.



1 Kings – [22 Chapters](#)

The history of Israel's kings continues, including the wisest and richest (**Solomon**) and the most evil (Ahab—with plenty of help from his queen, Jezebel). Even God's prophets and the idol-worshipping priests of Baal join in the constant conflict.



2 Kings – [25 Chapters](#)

The conflict and intrigue continue. Good kings, bad kings, prophets, and miracles fill this book. Ultimately, almost everyone degrades morally to the lowest level until God cannot take it anymore, and He has the Assyrians and Babylonians crush Israel. (You have to read the book to understand how this takes place.) Although 2 Kings does not have a happy ending, this is an accurate recording of history.



1 Chronicles – [29 Chapters](#)

First Chronicles is sort of a combination of Numbers and 1 Kings. Do not feel bad if you put off reading this one until later.



2 Chronicles – [36 Chapters](#)

Second Chronicles is a parallel of the book of Second Kings, from the perspective of the Jewish priests.



Ezra – [10 Chapters](#)

After the fall of the Babylonian Empire, the Persian king allows some Jewish captives to return to their homeland with Ezra. This book focuses on their return and the rebuilding of their city, temple, and lives. Surrounded by enemies, it was not easy.



Nehemiah – [13 Chapters](#)

Nehemiah, sort of a "religious storm trooper," decides Israel has taken enough abuse from their enemies and organizes the rebuilding of a fortified wall surrounding Jerusalem. This documentation of **Nehemiah's courage and leadership is very inspiring.**



Esther – [10 Chapters](#)

Another of the Bible's great "story" books. This **true account** of a beautiful queen and an evil prime minister is better than fiction!

BOOKS OF WISDOM (OR "POETRY") (Next 5 Bible Books)



Job – [42 Chapters](#)

This book is thought to be the first of the Bible books written. Job marvelously demonstrates the conflict of good and evil. It also shows how well-meaning friends can cause more damage than good. In Bible terms, this book is considered "**wisdom literature**" because of the wisdom and insight it gives to the reader.



Psalms – [150 Chapters](#)

Psalms is the longest book in the Bible—and probably the most loved. Believed to be song lyrics, **we recommend reading one or two psalms each day** and doing the rest of your reading (if any) in another book of the Bible. Reading the book of psalms straight through is like reading a book of poetry straight through. Some of us can do it, but most of us cannot.



Proverbs – [31 Chapters](#)

Proverbs is the **most practical book** in the Bible. The first seven chapters read like the written advice of a father to a son. The rest of the book is a series of sentences that apply to many daily situations. Many people read a chapter in Proverbs each day as a way of sharpening their business skills while they sharpen their spiritual skills.



Ecclesiastes – [12 Chapters](#)

In some respects, Ecclesiastes is the **strangest book** in the Bible. It describes many pursuits tried by the author to gain pleasure. Yet, they all ended up making him feel hollow, rather than satisfied. (Sound familiar?) Not surprisingly, the general lesson of this book is that life is futile without God. Note: this is not a book to read when you are depressed!



Song of Solomon - [8 Chapters](#)

Also entitled "Song of Songs," this book describes the love between a man and a woman. Although not sexual by today's standards, some societies and cultures discouraged their young people from reading of this book until they were a little older.

MAJOR PROPHETS (Next 5 Bible Books)

Special Note on the Books of Prophecy That Follow(Isaiah through Malachi).

The Bible is unique when it comes to its books on prophecy. As an explanation, **prophecy describes two things**: Things the people were told to do by God. Things that would happen if the people **did** or **did not** do what God told them to.

The Bible clearly states that although many people claim to speak for God, only a few really do. The writers of these books were true prophets of God, and proved themselves in the most spectacular way. Of the events that were to have taken place by now, every revelation of God given through these prophets was **fulfilled with 100% accuracy**.



Isaiah – [66 Chapters](#)

Isaiah is one of the more difficult books in the Bible to understand. Yet, it was the book of prophecy most often quoted by Jesus. (That sounds like an endorsement to us.)



Jeremiah – [52 Chapters](#)

Jeremiah is the longest book of prophecy in the Bible. This is another book for the experienced Bible reader.



Lamentations – [5 Chapters](#)

Lamentations is a series of 5 poems about Jerusalem after its capture by the Babylonians. It naturally follows the book of Jeremiah, where he told the people they would be destroyed if they didn't change their ways, yet they refused to listen.



Ezekiel – [48 Chapters](#)

Of all the books in the Bible, this one comes the closest to describing the physical appearance of God and his angels.



Daniel – [12 Chapters](#)

Daniel includes several of the most famous stories in the Bible, including **Daniel in the Lions' Den**. You will definitely want to read the first 6 chapters of Daniel soon after you start reading the Bible. The last chapters are very symbolic and difficult to understand, though. You may want to put off reading them until later.

MINOR PROPHETS (Next 12 Bible Books)



Hosea - [14 Chapters](#)

The book of Hosea has an unusual story line—the prophet is commanded by God to marry a prostitute. You will understand why when you read the book.



Joel - [3 Chapters](#)

Joel is a short and interesting book. Through this prophet, God uses an analogy of a locust plague to warn the people of Jerusalem that judgment (through the Babylonians) is coming.



Amos - [9 Chapters](#)

Amos is one of those books of prophecy that gives the everyone **an important weapon—the ability to recognize some cults**. The book is straightforward (for a book of prophecy) yet many cults refer to the book of Amos, claiming some of its verses were written about them or one of *their* “prophets.”

Read it yourself and see that Amos was writing to (the residents of) various 8th century BC capital cities and not about someone who lived in the last 200 years or so.



Obadiah - [1 Chapter](#)

Obadiah is the shortest book of prophecy. It is also the shortest book in the Old Testament. It describes the future destruction of one of Israel’s enemies, the ancient country of Edom.



Jonah - [4 Chapters](#)

Jonah contains one of the most widely recognized stories in Bible, that of Jonah being swallowed by a “**large fish**.” Why not read it yourself?



Micah - [7 Chapters](#)

This little gem is most famous for the passage in chapter 5 that predicts the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem more than 700 years later. **Check it out!**



Nahum – [3 Chapters](#)

Nahum is a book written to the people of Assyria (the greatest nation in the world at that time) and their capital of Nineveh. Nahum tells them their world empire will come to an end if they do not change their ways. They did not believe this prophet from the puny nation of Israel, and they were destroyed a hundred years later in 612 BC.



Habakkuk - [3 Chapters](#)

This is a cool book.

Habakkuk told the people in Judah (what was left of Israel in those days) to change their ways. Reacting like most people and nations to God's prophets, they told him to get lost. Habakkuk then asked God why the people would not respond properly. God's answer starts in chapter 1, verse 5.



Zephaniah – [3 Chapters](#)

Zephaniah is another book warning the people in 6th century BC Judah (and a few other nations) that judgment was coming if they did not change their ways.



Haggai – [2 Chapters](#)

Haggai passes on God's message, encouraging his contemporaries to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed during the Babylonian conquest. It ties in nicely with the book of Ezra.



Zechariah – [14 Chapters](#)

This is a great book. You not only get a glimpse of what God and the angels are really like, but this book explains many symbols used in prophetic writing. (For that reason, it is one of the first "prophecy books" you should read.)

It also refers to the restoration of the temple in Israel after the Babylonian conquest, tying in with the book of Haggai that precedes it.

Finally, it contains many important prophecies regarding the coming Messiah—fulfilled 500 years later by Jesus Christ.



Malachi – [4 Chapters](#)

Malachi contains what amounts to a humorous and somewhat sarcastic dialogue between God and his hypocritical followers. This is a good book to read early on.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

GOSPELS (Next 4 Bible Books)



Matthew – [28 Chapters](#)

Matthew is one of the four “biographies” of Jesus in the Bible. (Strictly speaking it is not a biography, but it is close enough that you get the idea.) The original audience was the Jewish people who converted to Christianity or were thinking about doing so.

For that reason, Matthew starts with a list of the ancestors of Jesus. This would be important to a Jewish audience, since Old Testament prophecies required Jesus to have a specific parentage. This explains how Jesus met that requirement.

For the rest of us, hang in there until you get past the list of names. The book is very interesting and contains Jesus’ most famous teaching, **the Sermon on the Mount** (Chapters 5, 6, and 7).



Mark – [16 Chapters](#)

Mark is the second of the four Biblical “biographies” of Jesus. Shorter, and more fast-paced than the other biographies, **we recommend making Mark one of the first books in the Bible you read.**



Luke – [24 Chapters](#)

Luke is the longest of the four “biographies” of Jesus in the Bible. This is the book in the Bible that best covers the **birth of Jesus** we hear each Christmas.

It also contains a story in chapter 16 that gives us a glimpse of heaven and hell. Like the book of Matthew, this book contains a list of Jesus’ ancestors. Yet, it traces the ancestry of Jesus through Mary rather than through Joseph, as the book of Matthew does.



John – [21 Chapters](#)

John is the last of the four “biographies” of Jesus in the Bible. Different from the others, John opens his book with symbolism.

Many people believe that Gospel of John **is the best** of the four biographies for New Christians and we recommend reading Gospel of John first.

HISTORY (Next 1 Bible Book)



Acts – [28 Chapters](#)

Acts, whose full title is “Acts of the Apostles,” describes the **adventures** of the 11 apostles that remain after Jesus’ resurrection. This wonderful book starts out with the apostles picking a twelfth “apostle” to replace Judas, who committed suicide after betraying Jesus. Christ later shows the world who He wanted as the twelfth apostle—an unlikely Christian-hater named Saul.

PAULINE EPISTLES (Next 13 Bible Books)



Romans – [16 Chapters](#)

The book of Romans is one of the **most important** in the Bible. We recommend it as the first one to read after getting a “foundation” with the four Gospels and Acts. It describes why a person would want to be a Christian, and how they can become one.



1 Corinthians - [16 Chapters](#)

First Corinthians is a letter written to the most corrupt Christian church specifically addressed in the Bible. Appropriately, **Chapter 13 is one of the most famous** in the Bible, powerfully explaining a simple principle that would help get this church (and the rest of us) back on the right track.



2 Corinthians – [13 Chapters](#)

Second Corinthians can be thought of as the sequel to 1 Corinthians. The church followed some of the earlier advice, but still **had some problems**. A special feature of this book is that it lets Christians know what their heavenly bodies will be like.



Galatians – [6 Chapters](#)

The letter to the Galatians addresses a problem seen in many churches today: adding man-made requirements for being a Christian. This book beautifully reveals how free from external requirements Christianity really is. This is another good book to learn what separates **true Christianity** from the world’s religion.



Ephesians – [6 Chapters](#)

Ephesians has at least **three special points of interest**. First, it explains how people receive special abilities when they become Christians. Second, it outlines the roles of the husband, wife, and child in a family. Third, it describes the “spiritual battle” taking place around us, about which most of us are not aware.



Philippians – [4 Chapters](#)

Philippians is a wonderful book.

If life is stressing you out, this short book is a good place to go.



Colossians – [4 Chapters](#)

Colossians is another short book.

It is especially suited to reading by new Christians yet anyone, Christian or not, can benefit from reading Colossians.



1 Thessalonians – [5 Chapters](#)

First Thessalonians is not only easy to read, but it contains one of the best descriptions in the Bible of what happens to departed Christians.



2 Thessalonians – [3 Chapters](#)

Second Thessalonians is a short “sequel” to 1 Thessalonians. Another short book, it would be easy for anyone to read them both in an evening.



1 Timothy – [6 Chapters](#)

If you want to learn what separates a real church leader from a poor one, First Timothy is a great place to find out.



2 Timothy – [4 Chapters](#)

Second Timothy is not only the best “sequel” in the Bible, but it also provides comfort for those “reaching the end of their road.”



Titus – [3 Chapters](#)

Titus is a short letter of guidance and encouragement to a young pastor that includes great advice usable by all of us.



Philemon – [1 Chapter](#)

Philemon is a letter, a story, and a lesson rolled into one.

GENERAL EPISTLES (Next 8 Bible Books)



Hebrews – [13 Chapters](#)

Hebrews is another of the **most** important Books in the Bible. It is not the easiest book to understand, so read a number of other New Testament books first to give you some background information.



James – [5 Chapters](#)

James is a **cool book**. Written by Jesus' (half) brother, you will find this book very relevant to today's world.



1 Peter – [5 Chapters](#)

Would you like to hear from someone who literally walked the Earth with Jesus for three years? If so, this is a **great** book to read.



2 Peter – [3 Chapters](#)

This letter contains more **great teaching** from one of the apostles.



1 John – [5 Chapters](#)

A letter written by the same person who wrote one of the Bible's four "biographies" of Jesus, the Gospel of John.



2 John – [1 Chapter](#)

A short letter that warns us all to **watch out for** and avoid false teachers.



3 John – [1 Chapter](#)

This book is a short letter of encouragement.



Jude – [1 Chapter](#)

The second of two books in the Bible written by a (half) brother of Jesus. It is another **warning** against listening to false teachers and false teaching.

APOCALYPSE (Next 1 Bible Book)



Revelation – [22 Chapters](#)

Revelation is the **New Testament's one book of prophecy**. It is also the only book of prophecy that we really have not gotten to yet " *in time-wise*." Revelation's language is very symbolic, which makes it a difficult book to understand.

Still, everyone should read this book at least once, since it does **reveal everyone's future**. Remember, every prophecy in the Bible came to pass exactly as it was stated when its time came to be fulfilled. Therefore, that will also be the case for the writings in this book.

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