

### Lesson 3: The Scriptures (a.k.a. The Bible)



The **Scriptures** are the word of God. The Bible contains the Scriptures; therefore, the Bible is the Word of God in human words. Because the Scriptures come from God, they have the power to transform our lives. The Bible is a whole library of books written over the course of more than a thousand years, in many different styles, with many different points of view, by dozens of different writers (*all inspired by the Holy Spirit*). But the Bible is also one book, with One Author (*God*), telling one story—the story of our salvation. Hence, the Bible contains and reveals **Salvation History**, the story of how God saved and redeemed man through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The word “Scripture” means “Sacred Writings.” The word “Bible” comes for the Greek word “biblia” meaning “Books.” The Bible was written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is divided into two main parts: the **Old Testament** and the **New Testament**. There are a total of 73 Books in the Catholic Bible: 46 of those Books are found in the Old Testament and the remaining 27 Books comprise the New Testament. Protestant Bibles have less books since they do not contain: Baruch, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach, and parts of Ester and Daniel.

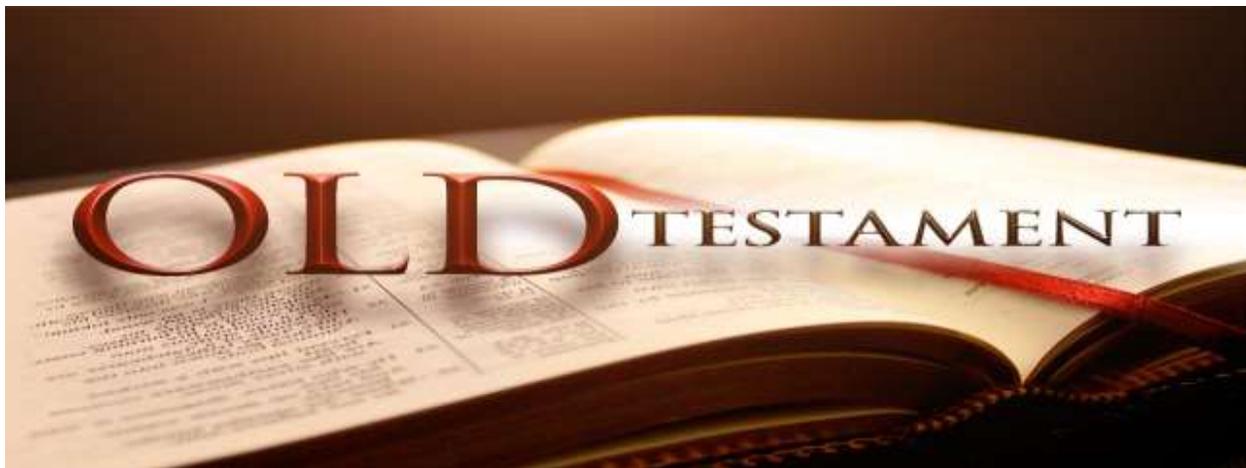
Instead of being placed chronologically, the books of the Bible are organized into four broad categories. We see these four broad categories in both the Old and New Testament: The Law, History, Wisdom, and Prophecy. The following chart gives a visual breakdown of the categories and the books they contain.

### Old Testament

1. The Law  
(*Genesis to Deuteronomy*)
2. History  
(*Joshua to 2 Maccabees*)
3. Wisdom  
(*Job to Sirach*)
4. Prophecy  
(*Isaiah to Malachi*)

### New Testament

1. The (New) Law  
(*The Gospels*)
2. History  
(*The Acts of the Apostles*)
3. Wisdom  
(*The Epistles*)
4. Prophecy  
(*Revelation*)



### **Books of the Old Testament**

#### **The Law:**

*The first five Books of the Bible are called "the Law" or "the Pentateuch." They are traditionally attributed to Moses and they contain the story of creation and Israel. They also provide Israel's fundamental laws.*

**Genesis** tells the story of the beginning of everything. It starts with creation and ends with Israel moving to Egypt.

**Exodus** recounts how the people of Israel, led by Moses, escaped from slavery in Egypt and received the Law in the wilderness of Sinai. It also tells how the people of Israel fail to live up to their unique relationship with God, so that a new, lesser law has to be given for them.

**Leviticus** details the laws that the nation of Israel must follow. Every detail of their worship life is made explicit because the Israelites have proved that they cannot be trusted to worship God properly.

**Numbers** tells how Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness. It is called Numbers because it gives a census of all the tribes of Israel.

**Deuteronomy** means “second law” hence this book focus on the concessions that must be made due to the people’s hardness of heart. The core of this book is a constitution for the state of Israel. It gives a prophetic road map of Israel’s history: a prophecy that will be fulfilled in the historical books that follow.

### **The Historical Books:**

*These Books tell the history of Israel from the conquest of the Promised Land to the revolt of the Maccabees.*

**Joshua** tells how Israel conquered most of Canaan under Joshua, Moses’ successor.

**Judges** recounts how God chose Judges (*leaders*) to stand up against the enemies of Israel. It recounts how time and again the people of Israel were unfaithful to God and how as punishment God let them fall into the hands of their enemies. But each time, when they repented, God sent them a judge to save them.

**Ruth** tells the story of the great-grandmother of King David. Therefore, Ruth is one of the human ancestors of Jesus Christ.

**1 and 2 Samuel** tell the story of the kingdom in Israel through the reign of David. 1 Samuel tells the story of the first King of Israel, Saul, and his long civil war with his successor and son-in-law, David. 2 Samuel continues the story of David after the death of Saul. David builds the nation of Israel into a strong power, but he also suffers the consequences of his sins.

**1 and 2 Kings** tell of the reign of Solomon through the divided kingdom ending with the Babylonian Exile. 1 Kings continues with the reign of David’s son, Solomon, and his building of the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. 2 Kings tells how Israel’s two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, grew more divided by falling away from God and turning to foreign idols.

**1 and 2 Chronicles** covers much of the same history as the Books of Samuel and Kings, but the emphasis is on theology and the public liturgy of Israel. 1 Chronicles emphasizes the religious aspect of David’s reign and his preparations for the building of the Temple. 2 Chronicles emphasizes the kingdom of Judah.

**Ezra** tells of the return of the people to their homeland after the exile and how they rebuild the Temple and try to restore the pure worship of God.

**Nehemiah** tells the story of how he returns to Jerusalem to lead the rebuilding.

**Tobit** recounts how he attempts to keep his family on the path of righteousness and receives the help of an angel in disguise.

**Judith** shares how she saves her people from conquest by the Assyrians. This book is careful to point out that Judith's success comes because she trusted in God.

**Esther** tells the story of an exiled Israelite woman who becomes Queen of Persia and saves her people from a genocidal conspiracy.

**1 and 2 Maccabees** recalls the history of the Jewish rebellion against oppressive forces. 1 Maccabees tells the story of the Maccabean revolt; whereas 2 Maccabees tells part of the same story from a religious point of view seeing the hand of God at work.

### **The Wisdom Books:**

*These books contain the wisdom that appeals to all people in order to lead everyone closer to God.*

**Job** asks the most difficult question in all philosophy: why do good people suffer?

**Psalms** is the great hymnbook of Israel containing liturgical poetry. Many of the Psalms are attributed to King David.

**Proverbs** is a collection of wise sayings attributed to Solomon.

**Ecclesiastes** asks the most basic existential question: Is life worth living?

**The Song of Songs** (a.k.a. The Song of Solomon) is a love poem and an allegory of the love of God for His people.

**The Book of Wisdom** (a.k.a. The Wisdom of Solomon) celebrates Wisdom personified, and tells the story of salvation history as guided by Wisdom. It is the world's most famous love poem, in which a bride and groom alternately speak of their love for one another. The Church recognizes the poem as an allegory of Christ's love for his Church.

**Sirach** is a collection of wisdom on the subject of living life well. This book instructs us on how to live a good life. The author tells us how to live in the real world without compromising our faith in God.

## The Prophets:

*The prophetic books of the Bible reveal the message of God for His people as given through His prophets. There are 4 Major Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah. There are called "Major Prophets" because their books are longer than the other prophets (not because they are more important than the other prophets). The remaining prophets are referred to as "Minor Prophets."*

**Isaiah** foretells judgment on Judah for its sins, but also brings the comforting promise that a faithful remnant will return to Jerusalem and ultimately the Messiah will come to save all God's people. This book has some of the clearest prophecies of the coming of Christ. The first part of the book warns of the disaster that will befall Judah if the people do not turn back to God. The rest of the book promises redemption to the people even though they have sinned.

**Jeremiah** foretells the destruction of Judah, but also promises a time when God would institute a New Covenant with His people.

**Lamentations** is a series of poems, attributed to Jeremiah, on the destruction of Jerusalem.

**Baruch** tells captive Israelites that Jerusalem will not abandon them and the way of Moses is still the best and wisest way to live.

**Ezekiel** sees visions of the heavenly worship and looks forward to a perfected Israel after the Exile, where the liturgy of the Temple will be perfectly celebrated. Even though Ezekiel foretells destruction, his message is ultimately one of hope: no matter how impossible it seems, God can bring dead Israel back to life.

**Daniel** is a combination of prophecy and inspiring stories. Much of the book describes an apocalyptic vision of the coming of the Son of Man.

**Hosea** compares Israel to an adulterous wife, but promises that God will redeem His people even after their adultery (*idolatry = worship of other gods*). Hosea's marriage is a metaphor for God's relationship with Israel: Israel is unfaithful, but God takes her back.

**Joel** is a vision of impending judgment on the Day of the Lord, a call to repentance, and a promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit.

**Amos** pronounces judgment against Israel's enemies, but the most terrible judgment against Israel itself.

**Obadiah** pronounces judgment against Edom, an enemy of Israel. This is the shortest book in the Old Testament.

**Jonah** is a reluctant prophet who learns about God's mercy through his enemy's repentance.

**Micah** chastises the leaders of Judah for bringing on God's judgment.

**Nahum** rejoices in the coming destruction of Nineveh but warns Jerusalem to expect the same fate.

**Habakkuk** paints the advancing Babylonians as God's instruments for chastising Judah. He also pronounces judgment against the wicked, but preaches comfort to the righteous who live by faith.

**Zephaniah** describes the Day of the Lord, when terrible judgment will come to the wicked by the righteous will be freed from affliction. He pronounces God's judgment against the whole world.

**Haggai** urges the people to stop stalling the rebuilding of the Temple. He chastises the people for living in luxury while the Lord's house is in ruins.

**Zechariah** hopes to shake the returned exiles out of their complacency.

**Malachi** chastises the chosen people for hypocrisy but foresees a time when every nation will offer God a pure sacrifice.



## The Books of the New Testament

### The Gospels:

*The Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life and ministry. Each of the Evangelists (writers of the Gospels) pick different details of Christ's life to emphasize, but all tell the story of Christ.*

**Matthew** focuses on the teachings of Jesus. He emphasizes Jesus as the true heir of David's kingdom.

**Mark** is the shortest Gospel and tells Jesus' story based on St. Peter's preaching. He emphasizes Jesus as leader of a new Exodus.

**Luke** looks at Jesus as a doctor so his Gospel has a lot of miracles. Jesus' own Mother is considered one of Luke's sources for details surrounding Christ's infancy narratives.

**John** arranges the events of Jesus' life to show us that he is the Son of God. He emphasizes Jesus as the Word of God Incarnate. John also stresses our new creation in Christ. This Gospel contains material not included in the other three Gospels (*the Synoptic Gospels*).

### **History (of the Early Church):**

*The focus of this portion of the New Testament is on the establishing of the Early Church by Jesus' Apostles.*

**The Acts of the Apostles** tells how the early Church grew to thousands of believers; it focuses mainly on the works of St. Peter and St. Paul. Saint Luke wrote this book as a sequel to his Gospel.

### **The Epistles: (New Testament Wisdom)**

*These are letters from the Apostles to congregations that needed advice, discipline, or encouragement. The largest number of these letters were written by St. Paul.*

#### **Letters written by Saint Paul:**

**Romans** is the longest of Paul's letters and it examines how salvation history prepared the world for the Gospel.

**1 Corinthians** gives instructions on celebrating the liturgy and answers important questions about marriage, food offered to idols, and the resurrection.

**2 Corinthians** defends Paul's ministry after a difficult time with their community.

**Galatians** defends the Gospel against those who would subject Christians to the Law of Moses.

**Ephesians** shows how the Church expresses its unity in the way Christians live their lives.

**Philippians** warns the people against false teachers and reminds them of how to live a Christian life.

**Colossians** emphasizes the difference that baptism in Christ makes in the life of the Christian.

**1 Thessalonians** reassures us that the dead will be raised and that the coming judgment will be salvation for Christians.

**2 Thessalonians** warns the congregation not to believe those who say that Christ has returned already, reminding them to hold fast to what they have been taught.

**1 and 2 Timothy** present advice to Paul's close friends on how to be a leader in a Christian community.

**Titus** gives advice to a Christian leader on how to teach the Christian life.

**Philemon** is a personal note begging one of Paul's friends to take back his runaway slave without punishing him.

***The Remaining Epistles:***

**Hebrews** is a long essay on salvation history showing how the institution of the Old Testament foreshadowed their greater fulfillment in Jesus.

**James** emphasizes the importance of good works as the fruit of faith in Christ.

**1 Peter** gives advice to Christians on how to live their lives surrounded by a world of sin.

**2 Peter** warns against false teachers and cautions Christians not to despair when the promised return of Christ doesn't happen right away.

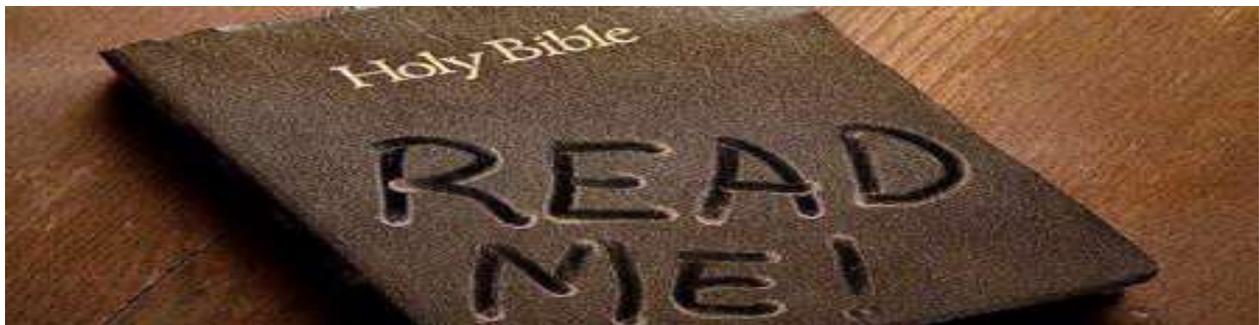
**1, 2, and 3 John** warn against specific false doctrines.

**Jude** is an urgent warning against false doctrine.

**Prophecy:**

Revelation means that God opens Himself, shows Himself, and speaks to the world voluntarily.

**Revelation** is a symbolic vision in which all of salvation history comes to a climax. It also outlines the structure of the Mass.



## How to Find a Scripture Passage or Reference

Bible passages are identified by **BOOK**, **CHAPTER**, and **VERSE**, for example, Gen 1:27-28 (The Book of Genesis, Chapter 1, Verses 27 through 28). The name of the book is often abbreviated. Your Bible's table of contents will help you determine what each abbreviation means. After the name of the book, the chapter number appears. A colon separates the chapter from the verse (*or verses*). The following chart presents a listing of the Bible Book Abbreviations:

<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>					
The following abbreviations are used for the books of the Bible:					
<i>Old Testament</i>					
Gen	Genesis	Tob	Tobit	Bar	Baruch
Ex	Exodus	Jdt	Judith	Ezek	Ezekiel
Lev	Leviticus	Esth	Esther	Dan	Daniel
Num	Numbers	1 Macc	1 Maccabees	Hos	Hosea
Deut	Deuteronomy	2 Macc	2 Maccabees	Joel	Joel
Josh	Joshua	Job	Job	Am	Amos
Judg	Judges	Ps	Psalms	Ob	Obadiah
Ruth	Ruth	Prov	Proverbs	Jon	Jonah
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mic	Micah
2 Sam	2 Samuel	Song	Song of Solomon	Nah	Nahum
1 Kings	1 Kings	Wis	Wisdom of Solomon	Hab	Habakkuk
2 Kings	2 Kings	Sir	Sirach	Zeph	Zephaniah
1 Chr	1 Chronicles		(Ecclesiasticus)	Hag	Haggai
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Isa	Isaiah	Zech	Zechariah
Ezra	Ezra	Jer	Jeremiah	Mal	Malachi
Neh	Nehemiah	Lam	Lamentations		
<i>New Testament</i>					
Mt	Matthew	Gal	Galatians	Philem	Philemon
Mk	Mark	Eph	Ephesians	Heb	Hebrews
Lk	Luke	Phil	Philippians	Jas	James
Jn	John	Col	Colossians	1 Pet	1 Peter
Acts	Acts of the Apostles	1 Thess	1 Thessalonians	2 Pet	2 Peter
		2 Thess	2 Thessalonians	1 Jn	1 John
Rom	Romans	1 Tim	1 Timothy	2 Jn	2 John
1 Cor	1 Corinthians	2 Tim	2 Timothy	3 Jn	3 John
2 Cor	2 Corinthians	Titus	Titus	Jude	Jude
				Rev	Revelation

## The Three Spiritual Senses

The Church teaches us to interpret Sacred Scripture in Spiritual Senses. The Holy Spirit often puts more meaning into a passage than the authors knew they were writing. The tradition of the Church tells us that there are three Spiritual Senses to look for when reading the Scriptures: the Allegorical (*or typical*) Sense, the Moral (*or tropological*) Sense, and the Anagogical Sense.

1. The **Allegorical (or Typical) Sense** shows us how people and events in salvation history point forward to other times. For example, when we read the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, we see that Isaac is a “type” of Christ since the sacrifice of Isaac shows God at work in a way that would reach its ultimate fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.
2. The **Moral (or Tropological) Sense** shows us how we can use the things the heroes of Scripture did as a pattern for our own lives. By seeing the moral content of their actions, we learn to turn toward good and away from evil.
3. The **Anagogical Sense** shows us how the events we see in Scripture point upward to what we will know in heaven. Through the things that are seen, we come to understand the things we cannot see yet. With those glimpses of the reality of the Kingdom of God, we build up our own hope.

When we look for the spiritual senses of a passage in Scripture, we must be careful not to forget the literal sense, since “all other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal,” as Saint Thomas Aquinas pointed out. However, the literal sense is not the only sense. We must remember that God, the ultimate Author of the whole Bible, knew the plan of salvation from the beginning. The Holy Spirit intended even the oldest parts of the Old Testament to be read in the light of the Incarnation, the coming of Jesus Christ as man.

## **The Bible in 50 Words**

God made, Adam bit,  
Noah arked, Abraham split,  
Joseph ruled, Jacob fooled,  
bush talked, Moses balked,  
Pharaoh plagued, people walked,  
sea divided, tablets guided,  
promise landed,  
Saul freaked, David peeked,  
prophets warned, Jesus born,  
God walked, love talked,  
anger crucified, hope died,  
Love rose, Spirit flamed,  
Word spread, God remains!

Ever wonder what would happen if  
we treated our Bible like we treat  
our cell phone?



vs.



What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?

What if we flipped through it several times a day?

What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?

What if we used it to receive messages from the text?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to Kids as gifts?

What if we used it when we traveled?

What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go....hmm...where is my Bible?

Oh, and one more thing:

Unlike our cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being |  
disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill.

Makes you stop and think, "Where are my priorities?"

## Old Testament Historical Periods

The Old Testament covers nine historical periods beginning with creation and ending about 400 years before the birth of Christ. Each historical period is summarized below:

*(Dates are Approximate)*

### **Historical Period #1**      **The Creation and Fall Period** (4004-2234 BC)

The main events of creation (Genesis 1-11) were:

**The Creation** of the heavens and the earth, and all living things including mankind. God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh day to establish the Sabbath day.

**The Fall** of Adam and Eve caused sin and death to enter into the world. God pronounced a curse upon the man, woman, and serpent, and he also declared that the Messiah would someday come and crush the head of the serpent.

**The Flood** which came upon the whole world yet God saved Noah and his family.

**The Tower of Babel** where rebellious mankind gathered and God confused them with the creation of different languages.

### **Historical Period #2**      **The Abraham and Sons Period** (1996-1689 BC)

The main people surrounding Abraham and the Hebrews (Genesis 12-50) were:

**Abraham** was called by God from a distant land in the Middle East. God promised him that if he obey Him God would multiply his descendants as the sand in the seashore and the stars in the sky, and one of his descendants would be the Savior of all mankind.

**Isaac** was Abraham's child that was born in his old age according to the promise of God. His name means "laughter" because Abraham's wife, Sarah, laughed when she heard that she would bear a son in her old age.

**Jacob** was the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob's name actually means "deceiver" but God turned everything about his life into a blessing and his name was changed to Israel.

**Joseph** was the favorite son of Jacob and his beloved wife, Rachel. Joseph was gifted in that he could interpret dreams, and his brothers were jealous of him and sold him into slavery in the land of Egypt. Joseph was able to save the Hebrews from extinction.

### **Historical Period #3**      **The Moses and Exodus Period** (1571-1451 BC)

The main events of the period of Moses (*Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*) were:

**The Calling of Moses** when the Hebrews were in the land of Egypt. The Pharaoh had ordered the death of all Hebrew male babies because they were growing so rapidly. Moses was born and grew up in the house of Pharaoh. Later he developed a yearning to seek after the Hebrew God whom he met at a burning bush. Moses later returned to free the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt.

**The 10 Plagues and the Exodus** was the period of time when Moses and Aaron came into the house of Pharaoh and demanded to let the people of Israel go. Pharaoh refused and after a series of 10 plagues the Hebrews escaped Egypt. The Hebrews escaped with all the wealth of Egypt and God appeared in a pillar of fire and led them through the Red Sea.

**The Giving of the Law** was when the Hebrews came to Mount Sinai and God gave Moses the 10 Commandments. The Hebrews rebelled while waiting for Moses and built a golden calf. When Moses came down from the mountain he broke the tables of stone. Later God wrote the 10 Commandments with his own fingers on a new set of stone tablets. He also gave Moses a description of the tabernacle which was a tent that God's presence would dwell in throughout their journeys until they entered the Promised Land.

**The 40 Years of Wandering in the Wilderness** was when the children of Israel would not believe in the promises of God and they desired to go back to the land of Egypt. When they came to the land that God had promised them, they became afraid and only Joshua and Caleb had the courage to believe in the promises of God. This lack of faith caused them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

#### **Historical Period #4**      **The Joshua and Conquest Period** (1451-1443 BC)

The main events surrounding Joshua and the conquest (Joshua 1-24) were:

**The Death of Moses** was the period when Moses gave his final speech to the Hebrews regarding all the promises of God. He reminded them that if they would obey God they would be blessed, but if they disobeyed they would be cursed and scattered throughout the earth, and a sword of persecution would follow them wherever they went.

**The Crossing of the Jordan** was the event when the Hebrews crossed into the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey. Joshua led them in ordering the priests to carry the Ark of the covenant and the waters of the Jordan split in two as they entered into the Promised Land.

**7 Years Conquering the Land** was a time of conquering the rebellious idolaters that inhabited the land. They were instructed to conquer and destroy yet they were disobedient. They did not drive out the Canaanites and they intermarried with Canaanite women.

**Settling in the Land of Canaan** where the territory was distributed among the 12 tribes, and later Joshua gave a farewell speech to encourage the people and to warn them what would happen if they disobeyed.

## **Historical Period #5**      **The Judges and Samuel Period** (1443-1095 BC)

The main events during the period of the Judges (Judges 1-21) were:

**The 7 Cycles of Sin, Bondage, Deliverance, Blessing.** Every generation fell into a terrible cycle. First, they would forget God's commands and commit idolatry. Second, a foreign invasion would take place and bring severe oppression. Third, they would cry out to God for help. Fourth, God would send a judge to save them.

**The first 300 Years of Israel's history.** The book of Judges begins just after the death of Joshua, and ends with Samuel, the last judge of Israel. After this was the period of the Kings.

**The Judges** came by the hand of God to help the oppressed Israelites.

## **Historical Period #6**      **The David and Solomon Period** (1085-922 BC)

The main people during the period of the Kings (Samuel and 1 Kings) were:

**Samuel** was the first of the great prophets of Israel. His mother Hannah had been barren her whole life and prayed to God for a son promising that she would dedicate his life to the service of the Lord if He would fulfill her desire. God answered her prayer and Samuel became famous in the land for his prophecies. He anointed the first king of Israel Saul, as well as David.

**Saul** was the first king of Israel. The people had cried for a King because the lands around them all had a King, but the Lord was their King. God finally told Samuel to anoint Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. Saul had an evil heart, and God gave them a king who was fashioned after their own image because they had sinful hearts. Saul spent most of his life hunting down David so that he could destroy him because he knew that David was the Lord's anointed.

**David** was Israel's rightful King chosen by the Lord and anointed by Samuel the Prophet. When he was still a young boy he fearlessly slew the Philistine giant named Goliath who had taunted the armies of God. David defeated him with a sling and a stone. David spent much of his life running from Saul, but finally when King Saul died seven years later the tribes crowned David king. David was a warrior king and because of that he was not allowed to build the Temple which he so longed to do. He would pass on that task to his son, Solomon, the man of peace.

**Solomon** was the son of David who built the Temple in Jerusalem. During a dream, God offered Solomon anything he wished for and Solomon asked for wisdom to lead God's people. Because of this God gave him great power and wealth and his fame was known throughout the world. Solomon made a mistake by marrying the daughters of foreign kings. He allowed them to build altars to their gods and this brought a great downfall to Israel. By the time Solomon was in his old age the kingdom was ready to be split in two.

## **Historical Period #7**      **The Divided Kingdom Period** (922-722 BC)

The main events and people during the period of the Divided Kingdom (Samuel and 1 Kings) were:

**Civil War** happened when Solomon died and his sons and military commanders struggled for the throne. Solomon had blessed Rehoboam to be the new King, but Jeroboam had more military influence. Each claimed to be God's chosen King of Israel and Judah. Finally after the struggle, 10 tribes went to the North following Jeroboam. The name of the Northern Kingdom was called "Israel." The remaining two tribes in the South made Rehoboam their King. The Southern Kingdom was called "Judah."

**Isaiah** was a great prophet who lived in Jerusalem during the time when the Assyrians were rising to power. He warned Jerusalem about their idolatry and their foreign allegiances. He spoke about the captivity's that would come. Isaiah was one of the great prophets and he spoke more about the Messiah than any other book in the Old Testament.

**Jeremiah** was one of the great prophets and he lived during the time that the Babylonians were coming to power. He spoke against Judah about the folly of idolatry. He prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the temple would be plundered by the Babylonians. He said that the Jews would be taken away from their land for 70 years and then they would return. He also spoke about a new covenant that would come in the future where God would write the law on the hearts of men.

## **Historical Period #8**      **The Destruction of Israel and Judah Period** (722-586 BC)

The main events and people during the period of the Fall of Israel and Judah (2 Kings) were:

**The Prophets** appeared during the time of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The prophets were mouthpieces of God bringing His message to a rebellious people. The prophets of the Assyrian period were Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and Nahum. The prophets of the Babylonian period were Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Obadiah, and Daniel. The last prophets were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

**The Fall of Israel** in 722 BC happened because all the Kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel were wicked, every one of them. They were idol worshipers and they forsook the commandments of the Lord until the Assyrians came and led them away as prisoners to the land of Assyria. These were known as the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel, because no one knows what happened to them.

**Revival in Jerusalem** happened because eight of the Kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah sought the Lord, and the other 20 were wicked. The Kings who served the Lord were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

**The Fall of Judah** in 586 BC happened because they had forsaken the Lord. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem in 586 BC and took them to the land of Babylon, the land of idolatry.

### **Historical Period #9**      **The Return from Captivity Period** (539-400 BC)

The main events and people during the Return from Captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther) were:

**Cyrus Allows the Jews to Return after 70 Years.** Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon around 540 BC. It was by the hand of God that Persian tradition was to allow conquered peoples to return to their homelands and rebuild their cities and temples as long as they pay taxes to the Persian Empire. Cyrus made a decree allowing the Jews to return home and rebuild their temple. Unfortunately, only a small portion returned.

**Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.** The first move back to Israel was led by Zerubbabel who was of royal blood from the house of David. They found Jerusalem in ruins with a mixed breed of corrupt Jews (*Samaritans*) living there. But in spite of this they laid the foundations for the new Temple, and built an altar to the Lord in 536 BC. They finished the work on the Temple by 516 BC, exactly 70 years after they were taken captive, just as Jeremiah had predicted. In 458 BC, more Jews returned with a man named Ezra, a Priest and a Scribe. In 444 BC, Nehemiah obtained permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which miraculously happened within 52 days.

**The Temple of Zerubbabel** was known as the Second Temple, it was a remarkable achievement but nothing compared to Solomon's Temple. Later it was Herod the Great who would beautify the Temple of Zerubbabel and so much so that it became a marvel in the ancient world.

**The Final Prophets and the Close of the Old Testament.** The Prophet Malachi warned Israel about turning away from God. Ezra and Nehemiah canonized the Books of the Old Testament and they were read aloud to the people and interpretation was given. It would not be long before they would again forget about the Lord.

## **Some Important Characters from the Old Testament**

**Adam & Eve:** The first man and woman created by God. Adam and Eve introduce human evil into the world when they eat the fruit of a tree God had forbidden them to touch.

**Noah:** The survivor of God's great flood. Noah obediently builds the large ark, or boat, that saves the human race and the animal kingdom from destruction.

**Abraham:** The patriarch of the Hebrew people. Abraham is traditionally called "Father Abraham" because the Israelite people and their religion descend from him. God

establishes His covenant, or promise, with Abraham. God develops an ongoing relationship with the Israelites through Abraham's descendants.

**Isaac:** Abraham's son and the second patriarch. Isaac's importance consists less in his actions than in the way he is acted upon by others. God tests Abraham by commanding him to kill his son Isaac, and Isaac's blindness and senility allow his own son Jacob to steal Isaac's blessing and the inheritance of God's covenant.

**Jacob:** The grandson of Abraham and the third patriarch of the Israelite people. Jacob becomes the father of twelve sons who form the Tribes of Israel. Jacob experiences a life filled with deception and change. He steals his brother Esau's inheritance and wrestles with God. Appropriately, the nation that springs from Jacob's children derives its name from Jacob's God-given name, "Israel" (*which means "struggles with God"*).

**Joseph:** Jacob's son and the head official for the Pharaoh of Egypt. Despite being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph rises to power in Egypt and saves his family from famine. Joseph's calm and gracious response to his brothers' betrayal introduces the pattern of forgiveness and redemption that characterizes the survival of the Israelite people throughout the Old Testament.

**Moses:** The reluctant savior of Israel in its exodus from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. Moses mediates between God and the people, transforming the Israelites from an oppressed ethnic group into a nation founded on religious laws.

**Aaron:** Moses's brother, who assists Moses in leading the Israelites out of Egypt. God designates Aaron to be the first high priest in Israel.

**Joshua:** The successor of Moses as Israel's leader. Joshua directs the people in their sweeping military campaign to conquer and settle the Promised Land. Joshua's persistent exhortations to Israel to remain obedient to God imply that he doubts Israel will do so. His exhortations foreshadow Israel's future religious struggles.

**Rahab:** She houses two spies sent by Joshua. Because she saves the spies from death, she (*along with her family*) is spared at the Fall of Jericho.

**Samson:** One of Israel's judges and an epic hero who thwarts the neighboring Philistines with his superhuman strength. Samson's long hair is both the source of his strength and the symbol of his religious devotion to God.

**Samuel:** The last of Israel's judges and the first of the prophets. He anoints both Saul and David as king.

**Saul:** Israel's first king. After God chooses Saul to be king, Saul loses his divine right to rule Israel. Saul plots to murder David only to experience David's mercy.

**David:** The king of Israel and the founder of Jerusalem, or "Zion." Although David's claim to the throne is threatened by Saul and by David's own son, Absalom, David maintains his power by blending shrewd political maneuvering with a forgiving treatment of his enemies. David's decision to bring the **Ark of the Covenant** (*Israel's symbol of God*) to

the capital of Jerusalem signals the long-awaited unification of the religious and political life of Israel in the Promised Land.

**Absalom:** David's son, who attempts to overthrow his father's throne. Absalom's violent rise to power suggests that the evil that corrupts Israel comes from within.

**Solomon:** David's son and the third king of Israel. Solomon builds the Temple in Jerusalem and ushers in Israel's greatest period of wealth and power. God grants Solomon immense knowledge.

**Rehoboam & Jeroboam:** The opposing kings who divide Israel into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Rehoboam and Jeroboam introduce rampant worship of idols and false gods into their kingdoms.

**Elijah & Elisha:** The prophets who oppose the worship of the god Baal in Israel. After the division of Israel into two kingdoms, Elijah and his successor, Elisha, represent the last great spiritual heroes before Israel's exile. Their campaign in Northern Israel against King Ahab and Jezebel helps to lessen Israel's growing evil but does not restore Israel's greatness.

**Ahab & Jezebel:** The most wicked rulers of Israel. Ahab and Jezebel spread cult worship of the pagan god Baal throughout the Northern Kingdom. Dogs gather to eat their blood at their deaths, fulfilling Elijah's prophecy.

**Esther:** A timid Jewish girl who becomes the queen of Persia. Esther boldly and cunningly persuades the king of Persia to remove his edict calling for the death of the exiled Jews.

**Job:** The subject of God and Satan's experiment to measure human faithfulness to God in the midst of immense pain. Job scorns the advice of his friends, preferring instead to question God's role in human suffering. He retains an open and inquisitive mind, remaining faithful in his refusal to curse God.



# Old Testament Yearbook

from [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com)



## DAVID

The Glee Club

David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies.

2 SAMUEL 22:1



## ESTHER

The Prom Queen

This girl, who was known as Esther, was lovely in form and features.

ESTHER 2:7



## GIDEON

The Procrastinator

Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece."

JUDGES 6:38



## GOLIATH

The Bully

A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall.

1 SAMUEL 17:4



## JEREMIAH

The Goth

Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time.

JEREMIAH 37:16



## JEZEBEL

The Diva

Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, arranged her hair, and looked out of a window.

2 KINGS 9:30



## JOB

The Emo

May the day of my birth perish, and the night it was said, "A boy is born!"

JOB 3:3



## JONAH

The Swim Team

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea."

JONAH 1:12



## JOSEPH

The Prep

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him.

GENESIS 37:3



## MOSES

The Class President

Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people.'"

EXODUS 33:12



## NOAH

Woodshop

"Make yourself an ark of gopher wood."

GENESIS 6:14



## POTIPHAR'S WIFE

The Drama Queen

She called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed."

GENESIS 39:14



## RUTH

The Exchange Student

When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her. So the two women went until they came to Bethlehem.

RUTH 18:17



## SAMSON

The Jock

The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat.

JUDGES 14:6



## THE SERPENT

The Rebel

Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?"

GENESIS 3:1



## SOLOMON

The Player

Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines, and his wives led him astray.

1 KINGS 11:2-3

# OLD TESTAMENT

in the beginning



**1 GOD'S WORLD**  
The Bible begins (and ends) with a perfect world created by God. Humans choose to sin by tasting the forbidden fruit. The Bible shows how God offers reconciliation to his people.

**2**

**ABRAHAM'S STARS**

Abraham prays and meets God. He is promised new land and children as numerous as the stars. His great grandson Joseph dreams of stardom and becomes Prime Minister of Egypt.

CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

JACOBS FAMILY GO TO EGYPT c1700BC

God gives victory to Joshua and his army. The people settle down to a good life in Canaan. They promise that they will serve God.



**4**

**JOSHUA'S SWORD**



**3**

**MOSES' STICK**

God's people leave slavery in Egypt. Moses raises his stick to make a dry path across the sea and find water in the desert. God gives him the Ten Commandments.

c.1240BC

**JOSHUA**

**JUDGES**

1200BC

**JUDGES**

Whenever God's people stray away from Him, their lands are attacked. God sends a series of Judges to rescue them. Gideon prays for help and watches his enemies run away.



**6**

**DAVID'S CROWN**

God's people ask for a king; the greatest is David. The kingdom later splits into Israel and Judah. Israel falls into enemy hands first and the people are scattered round the Assyrian empire.

ISRAEL CONQUERED 722BC

**DAVID'S CROWN**

God's people ask for a king; the greatest is David. The kingdom later splits into Israel and Judah. Israel falls into enemy hands first and the people are scattered round the Assyrian empire.

**5**



**GIDEON'S TORCH**

The people of Judah are exiled to Babylon. Daniel serves the king well and stays loyal to God. He is tricked into the lions' den, but God rescues him.

JUDEANS EXILED 586BC

**EXILE**

**KINGS**

ISRAEL CONQUERED 722BC

**DAVID'S CROWN**

God's people ask for a king; the greatest is David. The kingdom later splits into Israel and Judah. Israel falls into enemy hands first and the people are scattered round the Assyrian empire.

BACK IN JERUSALEM

ROMANS CONQUER JERUSALEM 63BC

GREEKS DESTROY TEMPLE 167BC

**8**

**EZRA'S SCROLL**

The Jews are allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Ezra reads God's word out loud and worship is revived with enthusiasm. The people have returned home!



**7**

**DANIEL'S CHAINS**