

Australian Lutheran College

Course Book

for

Bible Introduction 1 and 2

BIB 1001-1 and 2

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Bible Introduction

A. General Introduction to the Bible

1. The Nature of the Bible

- a. While the term “Bible” comes from the Greek word for “book” (*biblion*), the term “Scriptures” comes from the Latin word for 'writings' (*scriptura*).
- b. Yet the Bible is not really a single book, but a library of 66 books, with many human authors, and written over a period of more than 1,000 years.
- c. These books have been acknowledged by the Christian Church as the divinely inspired word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17).
- d. They are the “canonical Scriptures”, the list (Greek: *canon*) of books authorised for liturgical use (1 Tim 4:13).
 - (1) Through them God institutes and empowers our worship with his Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Through them God acts on us in worship and tells us what he does for us in worship.
 - (3) Through them God teaches us how to worship him and receive blessings from him in our worship.
- e. The Bible is the record of God's twofold revelation as described in Hebrews 1:1-2^a
 - OT as the prophetic word of God
 - NT as the apostolic word of God that proclaims Christ the incarnate Son

2. The Basic Structure of the Bible

- a. The Bible falls into two parts, the first of which is also the Jewish Bible, called the *Tanach* by some modern Jews.
- b. The description of the two parts as the Old and New Testaments indicates both the continuity between them and the uniqueness of the second part.

- c. The terms derive from Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 9:15-20.
- (1) According to Jeremiah 31:31-34 the new covenant differs from the old in three ways
 - In its basis: forgiveness rather than observance of law
 - In its inscription: inscription by God of his teaching on worship in the human heart rather than on tablets of stone
 - In its effect: direct access and intimacy with God in worship rather than limited access.
 - (2) The Christian tradition follows Hebrews 9:15-20 in speaking of two testaments rather than two covenants to emphasise the elements of gratuity. The Greek term *diatheke* means a will or testament as well as a covenant.
- c. The purpose of both covenants is to regulate the relationship between God and his people as given in the divinely instituted pattern of worship.

B. Order of Books in the Old Testament

1. The Septuagint is the Greek Bible which was widely used in the Early Church.
2. The Apocrypha consists of the books found in the Septuagint, but excluded from the Hebrew Bible and Protestant translations of the Bible. In keeping with the catholic tradition, Luther still retained them in a separate part of the German Bible.

Hebrew Bible	Septuagint (Apocrypha in italics)	English Bible
<p>1. The Law (<i>Torah</i>) Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>2. The Prophets (<i>Nebiim</i>) a. The Former Prophets Joshua Judges 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings b. The Latter Prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p> <p>3. The Writings (<i>Kethubim</i>) Psalms Proverbs Job Festal Scrolls: • Song of Solomon • Ruth • Lamentations • Ecclesiastes • Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah 1-2 Chronicles</p>	<p>1. The Pentateuch Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>2. Historical Books Joshua Judges Ruth 1-2 Kings (1-2 Samuel) 3-4 Kings (1-2 Kings) 1-2 Chronicles <i>1 Ezra</i> 2 Ezra (Ezra-Nehemiah) Esther <i>Judith</i> <i>Tobit</i> <i>1-4 Maccabees</i></p> <p>3. Poetic Books Psalms <i>Odes</i> Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Job <i>Wisdom of Solomon</i> <i>Ben Sira</i> <i>Psalms of Solomon</i></p> <p>4. Prophetic Books Hosea-Malachi Isaiah Jeremiah + <i>Baruch</i> Lamentations + <i>Letter of Jeremiah</i> Ezekiel <i>Susanna</i> Daniel <i>Bel and the Dragon</i></p>	<p>1. The Pentateuch Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>2. Historical Books Joshua Judges Ruth 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings 1-2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther</p> <p>3. Poetic Books Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon</p> <p>4 Prophetic Books Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>

3. The order of books in the Hebrew Bible differs significantly from the order of the 39 books in the English Bible.

a. The Hebrew order

(1) The Law

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

(2) The Prophets

- The Former Prophets
 - Joshua
 - Judges
 - 1-2 Samuel
 - 1-2 Kings
- The Latter Prophets
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - The Twelve

(3) The Writings

- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Job
- The Five Festive Scrolls
- Daniel
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- 1-2 Chronicles

4. The significance of the Hebrew order

a. The Hebrew books are arranged according to the three main means of divine communication and their divinely authorised agents as indicated in Jeremiah 18:18 and Ezekiel 7:26.

- The **law** (Hebrew: *torah* = teaching) of the priests: worship
- The **counsel** (Hebrew: *etzah* = advice) of the sages/elders: daily life
- The **word** (Hebrew: *dabar* = word, event) or **vision** (Hebrew: *hazon*) of the prophets: national history

b. These three parts are called the *Torah* (Law), the *Nebiim* (Prophets), and the *Kethubim* (Writings).

c. This order, which was finalised by the rabbis about 90AD, is already evident in Luke 24:44 (cf. Matt 5:7).

- d. The *Torah* is identical with the English Pentateuch.
- e. The *Nebiim* consists of two parts.
 - The Former Prophets: Joshua; Judges; 1 - 2 Samuel; 1 - 2 Kings
 - The Latter Prophets: Isaiah; Jeremiah; Ezekiel; the Twelve
- f. The *Kethubim*, which contain material on worship and wisdom, consist of seven parts
- g. The order is theological and liturgical
 - (1) While the *Torah* is most authoritative, the *Kethubim* are least so.
 - (2) While the *Torah* and *Nebiim* are set for reading in the synagogue, the Psalms and the Festive Scrolls are the only books from the Writings that used in synagogue services.

5. The order of the Old Testament in the English Bible

- a. The English Bible follows the arrangement of books in the Greek Bible, called the Septuagint from its 70 translators (LXX). It however excludes the apocryphal books found in the Septuagint.
- b. The books of the OT in English fall into four main divisions
 - The Pentateuch
 - The Historical Books
 - The Poetical Books.
 - The Prophetic Books
 - ◆ Major Prophets
 - ◆ The Twelve Minor Prophets
- c. The books are arranged according to their literary genre and their chronology.
- d. While all parts are regarded as equally authoritative, the English Old Testament culminates in prophecy, which provides the link to the New Testament.

C. Arrangement of the Pentateuch

1. Names

- Hebrew: the *Torah* (Law) or the *Torah of Moses*
- Greek: the *Pentateuch* (Five Volumes)
- English: the Law of Moses or the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch

2. Structure

- a. The Pentateuch tells the story of God's creation of Israel as his holy people in six stages.
 - Primeval history of humanity as the family of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1-11)
 - History of the patriarchs as the founding fathers and mothers of Israel (Genesis 12-50)
 - Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 1-18)
 - Covenant with the law giving and the institution of the divine service at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19 - Numbers 10)
 - Journey to the Land of Canaan (Numbers 11 – 36)
 - Farewell speech of Moses about God's gift of the Land of Canaan to the Israelites (Deuteronomy)
- b. The story is cut short by the exclusion of the book of Joshua from the Pentateuch with its account of the settlement in the land. There were two reasons for this.
 - (1) The land was never fully occupied by the Israelites, but was always still to be received from God.
 - (2) Israel's existence as God's people did not depend on the possession of the land, but on their access to him in the divine service.

3. Importance of the Pentateuch

- a. It is the heart and core of the Old Testament
- b. It gives God's basis for Israel's ongoing existence as his people
 - His foundational promises to the patriarchs
 - His creation of Israel as his holy people
 - His gift of access to him and his blessings by the institution of the divine service at the tabernacle

D. THE PENTATEUCH

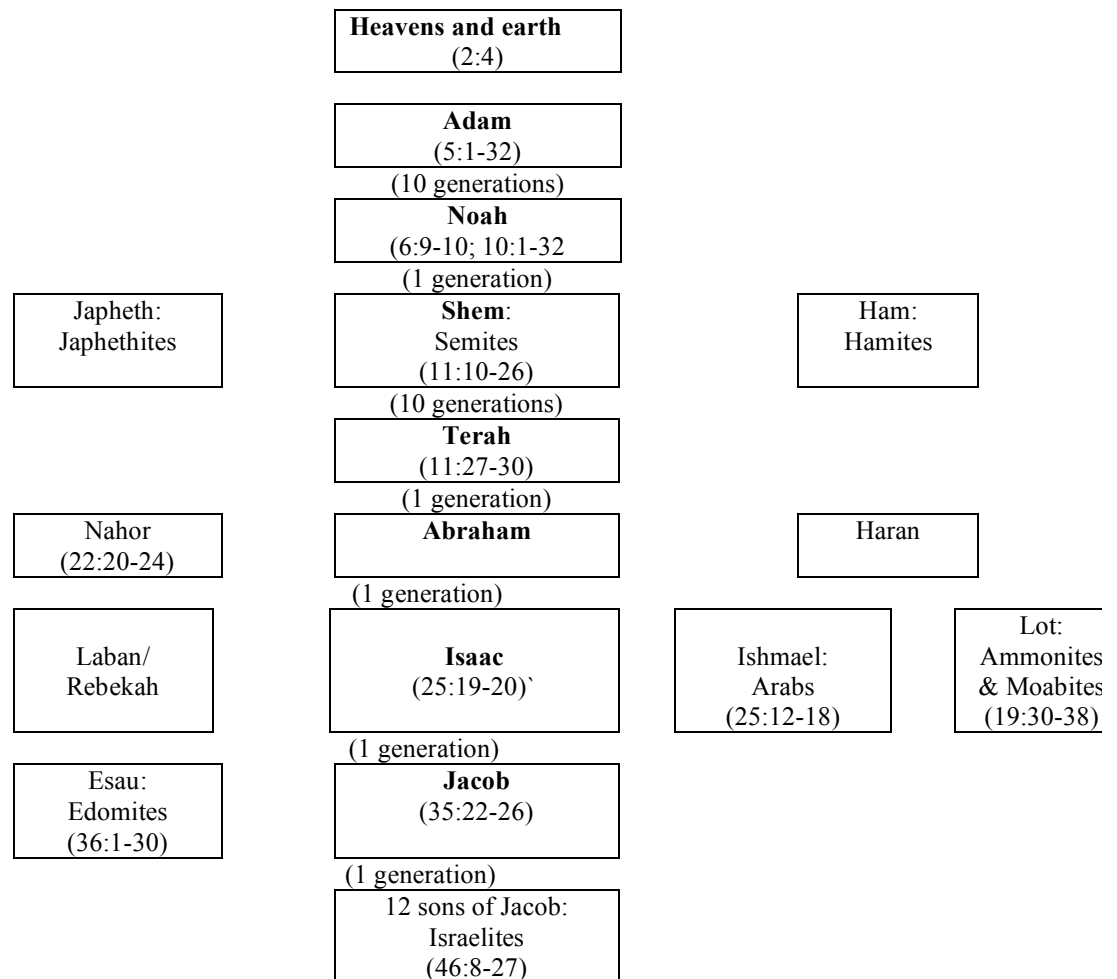
1. Genesis

A. Names

1. Hebrew: *Bereshith* from the first word of the book in Hebrew
2. Greek and English: *Genesis* = “origin/generation/ genealogy”
3. The book has to do with the origin and interrelationship of three things
 - The universe and its order (1:1-2:3)
 - The human race and its nations (2:4-11:32)
 - Israel and its tribes (12-50)

B. Structure

1. Ten interlocking genealogies



- a. They connect Israel to the first human beings and God's ordering of his creation.

- b. They show how Israel fits into the whole family of nations, is related to its neighbours, and is constituted as a tribal society.
 - Noah and Shem: Semite rather than Japhethite or Hamite nation
 - Terah: relation to Arameans, Ammonites and Moabites
 - Abraham: relation to Ishmaelites (Arabian Tribes)
 - Isaac: relation to Edomites

2. Three part structure

- a. Ordered creation: God's blessing in creation: Gen 1:1-2:3.
 - Birds and animals (1:22)
 - Humanity (1:28)
 - Sabbath (2:3)
- b. Primeval history: God's blessing in a fallen world: Gen 2:4 - 11:32
 - Birth despite excommunication and curse (2-3)
 - Community and culture despite envy and murder (4-5)
 - Order despite violence and chaos (6-10)
 - Growth despite linguistic confusion from political arrogance (11).
- c. Patriarchal history: God's blessing of Abraham: Gen 12-50
 - Gift of blessing to Abraham (12:1 - 25:18)
 - Transmission of the blessing to Jacob (25:19 - 36:43)
 - Reception of blessing by Jacob's family (37-50)

D. Main Features of Genesis 1:1-2:3

- 1. God's creation of the universe
 - Creation of the world from nothing by divine decree
 - Earth's production of plants and animals at God's command (1:11,12,24)
 - Sea's production of fish and birds at God command (1:20)
 - God's special decision to create humanity (1:26,27)
- 2. God's ordering of the world for vegetable, animal, and human life
 - Separation
 - ◆ Light from darkness (energy?)
 - ◆ Heavenly waters from earthly waters (space)
 - ◆ Sea from dry land (earth)
 - Provision
 - ◆ Light, water and land for vegetation
 - ◆ Vegetation for animals (1:30)
 - ◆ Seeds and fruit for humans (1:29)
 - Rule
 - ◆ Heavenly bodies over physical and vegetable world (1:14-18)
 - ◆ Human beings over the earth and the animals (1:26,28)

3. God's conferral of blessing
 - No blessing for the plants
 - Blessing of fish and birds for procreation (1:22)
 - Blessing of human race for procreation and rule over the earth (1:28)
 - Blessing of the seventh day as means of blessing (2:3)
4. Divinely instituted pattern of work and rest
 - Culmination of six 'closed' days of God's work in the seventh 'open' day of divine rest: window on eternity (2:1-3)
 - Creation of human race to share in God's work and rest
 - Sanctification of seventh day for rest with God as the goal of creation
5. The goodness of God's created world (1:31)

D. Main features of Genesis 2:4-25

1. Connection between humanity ('*adam*) and the ground ('*adamah*).
 - No man to till the ground (2:4-5)
 - Creation of man from the ground (2:6-7)
 - Creation of trees from the ground (2:8-9)
 - Creation of animals from the ground (2:18-20)
 - Creation of woman from man (2:21-25)
2. Unique relationship of man/husband [*ish*] and woman/wife [*ishshah*]
 - God as the marriage celebrant (2:22)
 - Wife as companion, co-worker ["helper"], and counterpart/complement ["suitable for him"] (2:18-20)
 - One flesh unity of couple that is stronger than kinship (2:23-24)

E. Pattern of sin and blessing in Genesis 3:1 - 12:3

1. Genesis 3: the fall
 - Sin: defiance of God for self-deification
 - God's judgment: expulsion from garden and death
 - God's preservation: skins for clothing
 - God's blessing: birth of Cain and Abel
2. Genesis 4-5: murder
 - Sin: killing of Abel
 - God's judgment: banishment from the soil
 - God's preservation: mark for protection
 - God's blessing: children and urban culture with music and metal work
3. Genesis 6-10: the flood
 - Sin: violence and chaos on a cosmic scale
 - God's judgment: flood

- God's preservation: ark for Noah and the animals
 - God's blessing: covenant with Noah for natural stability and repetition of Adamic mandate in 8:20-22 and 9:1-17
4. Genesis 11:1 - 12:3: the tower of Babel
- Sin: political and technological arrogance
 - God's judgment: confusion of language
 - God's preservation with the growth of nations > the Semites
 - God's blessing: call of Abram as mediator of blessing to all

F. Patriarchal history

1. God's blessing of Abraham: 12:1 - 25:18
- a. God's call of Abram with his three great promises: 12:1-7
- Great nation
 - Blessing
 - Land of Canaan: foundation of sanctuaries in 12:7, 8; 13:18
- b. Confirmation of the blessing
- Covenant with faithful Abram in Genesis 15:1-5,17-18
 - ◆ Promise of a son
 - ◆ Land grant
 - Confirmation of covenant to Abraham as God's deputy in Genesis 17:1-21
 - ◆ Perpetual covenant with him and his seed
 - ◆ Father of many nations and future kings
 - ◆ Commitment to Abraham and his seed to be their God
 - ◆ Perpetual possession of the land
 - ◆ Circumcision as the sign of the covenant
- c. Threats to God's blessing
- King of Egypt (12) and Gerar (20)
 - Sarah and Hagar (16 and 21)
 - The sacrifice of Isaac (22)
2. Jacob's struggle for the blessing: 25:19 - 36:43
- Twins in womb (25:19-26)
 - Birthright (25:29-34)
 - Father's blessing (27:1-45)
 - Wrestling with angel (32:24-32)
 - God's blessing (28:10-17) with the repetition of God's commands to Adam and Noah in 35:9-12
3. Blessing of Jacob's family: 37-50
- Disruption by favouritism and hatred (37:3-4)
 - Blessing of Joseph (39:2-6, 21-23)
 - The providence of God (45:5-8; 50:19-20)
 - The blessing of the 12 sons (49:2-27) with special blessings for

Judah (49:8-10) and Ephraim (48:8-21)

4. Transmission of God's blessing to Abraham and his seed through his word of promise
 - Apart from his family and their ancestors
 - Apart from his possession of land
 - Apart from natural fertility in procreation
 - Apart from the law of primogeniture
 - Apart from human plans and desires
 - Despite human sin

G. Main Themes

- God as the creator of the world, the nations, and of Israel
- Power of God's creative commands and gracious promises in creation and Israel's history
- God's covenants of God with Noah and Abraham
- Operation of God's blessing in a fallen world through procreation and through Abraham's descendants
- Origin of Israel's sanctuaries at places where God appeared to the Patriarchs
- God's hidden providence that brings good out of evil in human affairs

H. Purpose of Genesis

Genesis is a book of beginnings that shows

- How both the world and Israel was created and upheld by God's word with its performative commands and promises
- How the blessing of God works constructively even in a fallen world
- Israel's place in the world and its relationship with other nations
- How the Israelites came to live in Egypt

2. Exodus

A. Name

1. Hebrew: *Shemōth*
 - Meaning: Names
 - Origin: the first words of the book
2. English: **Exodus**
 - Meaning: going out, departure, journey from, procession
 - Origin: the Septuagint

B. Importance as Israel's Divine Constitution

1. Why was Israel a holy nation?
 - Redemption by the Lord from slavery to Egypt and its gods
 - God's covenant with vassal Israel as her divine overlord
 - His sanctifying presence with Israel in the tabernacle
2. For what purpose did it become God's people?
 - Access to God and his blessings in the divine service
 - Priestly mediation between God and nations

C. Structure

1. Connection of Exodus with Leviticus and Numbers
 - a. Narrative framework: journey in three stages (see list in Numbers 33)
 - Egypt to Sinai (Exod 13:17–19:2)
 - Sinai to Kadesh (Num 10:10–12:16)
 - Kadesh to Plains of Moab (Num 20–21)
 - b. God's legislation in each location for Israel's national institutions
 - Egypt: laws for Passover (Exod 12–13)
 - Sinai: laws for the divine service at tabernacle in God's covenant with Israel (Exod 20–Num 10)
 - Kadesh: laws for the holiness of the people and priests (Num 15–19)
 - Plains of Moab: laws for life in the land (Num 27–30,35)
 - c. Murmuring by people against Moses on each stage of the journey
 - Lack of water and food (Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3)
 - The power of the Canaanites (Num 14:2)
 - Lack of water (Num 20:3) and bread (Num 21:5)
2. Two part division of Exodus with the climax in 40:34-38
 - a. Procession of Israel from Egypt to Sinai: Exod 1-18

(1) Commission of Moses and Aaron: gift of God's name (1-4)

(2) Contest between God and Pharaoh (5:1–12:36)

(a) Demand for release of the Israelites (5:1–6:1)

(b) God's battles with the 'gods' of Egypt (6:12–12:36)

See 6:6; 7:4; 12:12; cf. Num 33:4.

- Blood (7:14-24): copied by magicians
- Frogs(7:25–8:15): copied by magicians with request for intercession by Pharaoh in 8:8-15
- Gnats (8:16-19): acknowledged as God's doing by the magicians
- Mosquitoes (8:20-32): distinction between Egyptians and Israelites in 8:22-23 with request for intercession by Pharaoh in 8:28-32
- Cattle plague (9:1-7): distinction between Egyptians and Israelites in 9:4-6
- Boils (9:8-12): inflicted on Egyptians and magicians
- Hail (9:13-35): distinction between Egyptians and Israelites in 9:26 with confession of sins by Pharaoh and request for intercession in 9:27-35
- Locusts (10:1-20): confession of sin by Pharaoh and request for intercession in 10:16-19
- Darkness (10:21-29): separation of Israelites from Egyptians in 10:23 with final rejection by Pharaoh in 10:28
- Death of Egyptian first-born male humans and animals (11:1–12:36): Passover meal with request for blessing by Pharaoh in 12:32

(3) Exodus from Egypt and deliverance at Red Sea (12:37–13:21)

- Departure from Egypt (12:37–13:22)
- God's victory at the Red Sea (14:1-31)
- Celebration of God's victory (15:1-21)

(4) Guidance and preservation in the desert (15:22–18:27)

- Sweet water at Marah: grumbling about water (15:22-27)
- Food in the desert: grumbling about food (16:1-36)
- Water from rock at Meribah: grumbling about water (17)
- Destruction of Amalekites (17:8-16)
- Institution of court system with seventy elders (18)

b. Consecration of Israel and its tabernacle at Mt Sinai: 19-40

(1) God's theophany and his covenant with Israel (19-24)

- Preparation for God's appearance (19)
- God's revelation of the Decalogue to Israel (20:1-21)

- Law of the altar (20:22-26)
 - Covenant code for Israel (21-23)
 - Consecration of Israel (24:1-11)
 - Ascent of Moses on Mt Sinai (24:12-18)
- (2) Instructions for the building of the tabernacle (25-31)
- The tabernacle and its furnishing (25-27)
 - The consecration of priests (28-29)
 - Other holy things (30-31)
- (3) Threat to God's presence by idolatry: access by name (32-34)
- (4) Building and the consecration of the tabernacle (35-40)

D. Main Themes

1. The deliverance of Israel by God
 - a. God's mercy (2:23-25; 3:7-9)
 - b. The divine warrior (7:1-5; 12:12; 14:13-14, 25; 15:1-18)
 - God = Israel's general/champion
 - Israel = God's armies
 - Egyptian 'gods' = God's enemies
 - Ten plagues = battles in God's war
 - Drowning at Red Sea = final victory
 - Journey to Canaan = victory march of God with his army
2. God's revelation of himself by name as redeemer and judge
 - Israel's knowledge of God and access to God's grace through his name (3:13-15; 6:2-8; 10:1-2)
 - Egyptians' knowledge of God's power (5:2 → 9:13-16; cf. 7:5; 14:17-18)
3. Service of God as the goal of the Exodus
 - Service of Pharaoh (1:13-14) → service of God (3:12; 5:1; 7:16; cf. 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3,24-26; 12:32)
 - Service of God with the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (12:14,21-27; 13:3-4)
4. God's covenant with Israel
 - a. God's commitment to Israel to be their God (19:4-6; 20:2,24)
 - b. God's requirements of Israel as his holy people
 - Ten commandments: disqualification from presence (20:3-17)
 - Altar of sacrifices as the place for theophany (20:22-26)

- b. God's glory as his accessible presence (40:34-38; cf. 13:20-22; 14:19-20; 19:9,18; 24:15-18; 29:43)
- 5. Israel's consecration as God's holy nation
 - God's promise to make Israel a holy nation (19:6)
 - Israel's consecration (24:3-8)
- 6. Tabernacle as God's residence and a mobile Mt Sinai
 - a. Purpose of the tabernacle as God's dwelling place (25:8)
 - b. Benefits of God's presence in the tabernacle (29:42-46)
 - God's meeting with his people.
 - God's speaking to Israel through Moses and the priests.
 - God's sanctification of the tabernacle and the priests.
 - God's dwelling with the Israelites as their God.
 - Knowledge of God: intimacy with him.
- 7. Idolatry as the threat to God's gracious presence given in his name
See story of golden calf in 32-34.
 - a. Threat of idolatry to Israel's survival and God's presence with his people (32:1-10; 33:1-3)
 - b. Fourfold intercession of Moses
 - Survival of Israel (32:11-14).
 - Forgiveness of idolatry (32:30-34)
 - God's presence with Israel (33:12-17)
 - Future grace and pardon (34:9)
 - c. God's name and gracious character (33:18-23; 34:5-8).

E. Purpose

- To reveal the character of God and the nature of his relationship with Israel
- To explain the origin and nature of Israel as God's holy people
- To present the tabernacle as the place of God's gracious presence and the holy name *Yahweh* as the God-given means of access to him

3. Leviticus

A. Name

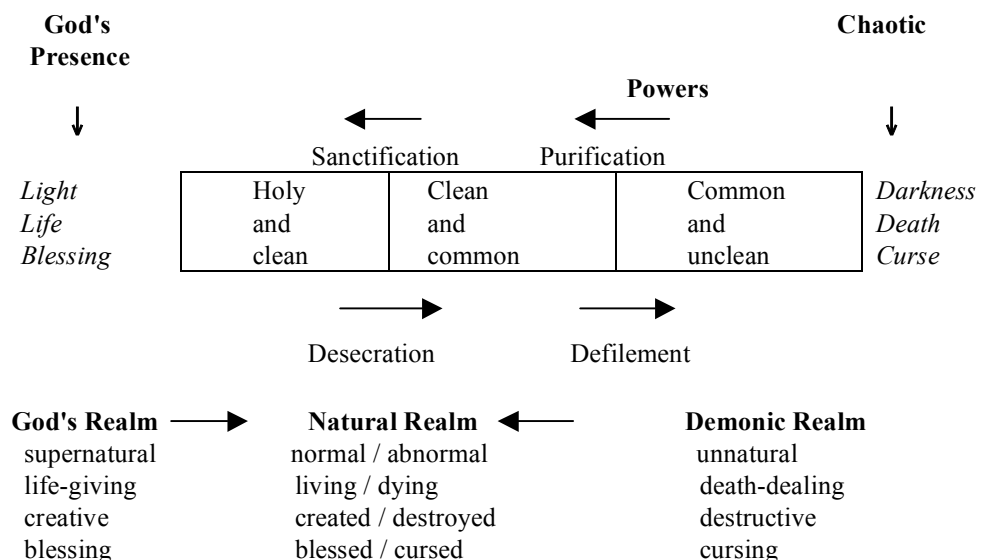
1. Hebrew: *Wayyiqra* (And he called) from the opening sentence
2. Greek: *Biblion Levitikon* (Levitical Book) from its Levitical laws
3. English: **Leviticus** from the Septuagint

B. Location and Content

1. The events in Leviticus are set at Mt Sinai.
2. After the entry of the Lord's glorious presence into the tabernacle in Exodus 40:34-38, the place of divine revelation changes from the mountain to the tabernacle in Leviticus 1:1 (cf. Num 1:1, 7:89).
3. After the dedication of the tabernacle in Exodus 40, Leviticus 1-9 continues the narrative sequence with the laws for the sacrifices in 1-7, the ordination of the priests in 8, and the inauguration of the regular sacrificial ritual in 9.
4. The book consists mainly of ritual legislation for the divine service and the proper involvement of the Israelites in it.

C. Conceptual Framework

1. The theology of Leviticus is basically liturgical.
2. It is developed in terms of purity and holiness and their opposites as indicated in Leviticus 10:10-11.



D. Structure

1. Legislation for the offerings and the removal of impurity (1-16)
 - a. Legislation for the main classes of offerings for the divine service
 - Laws for the laity (1:1-6:7)
 - Laws for the priests (6:8-7:38)
 - b. Inauguration of the divine service
 - Consecration of the priests (8)
 - Inaugural performance of the sacrificial service (9)
Note the purpose in 9:4-6,22-23.
 - God's judgment on the desecration of his holiness (10)
Note the summary of the role of the priests in 10:3,10-11
 - c. Treatment of impurity
 - Clean and unclean meat (11)
 - Impurity from childbirth (12)
 - Impurity from skin diseases and from fungus (13-14)
 - Impurity from sexual discharges (15)
Note the reason for purification in 15:31
 - d. Purification of tabernacle and people on Day of Atonement (16)
Note purpose of this ritual in 16:33
2. Legislation for the preservation of Israel's holiness (17-27)
 - a. Use and abuse of blood from animals (17)
Note the provision of blood for atonement in 17:10-12
 - b. Avoidance of sexual impurity (18)
Note the reason for avoiding sexual defilement in 18:24-28
 - c. Holiness code: participation in God's holiness (19-26)
Note its introduction in 19:2 and its climax in 26
 - Holiness of the congregation (19-20)
Note the explanation in 19:2; 20:7-8,26
 - Holiness of the priests (21-22)
Note the explanation in 21:6-8 and 22:31-33.
 - Holy times for worship (23)
 - Holy things: lampstand, show bread, and God's name (24)
 - Holy land: sabbatical and jubilee years (25)
Note the explanation in 25:23.
 - Results of right or wrong worship

- ◆ Blessings from respect for holy things (26:1-13)
- ◆ Curses from desecration of holy things (26:14-39)
- ◆ Restoration after repentance (26:40-46)
- Appendix: treatment of votive offerings and tithes (27)

E. Main Themes

1. God's provision of the divine service for Israel's life and sanctification (18:1-5; 22:31-33)
2. Purity as the prerequisite for involvement in the divine service at the tabernacle (7:19-21; 15:31)
3. Reception of holiness from God through contact with the most holy things at the tabernacle (6:17-18,25-27^a)
 - a. God sanctifies the priests and the people through their involvement in the sacrificial ritual (20:7-8; cf. 21:8^b,15,23; 22:9,16,32).
 - b. They are called to share in God's own holiness, without desecrating it by their behaviour (11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8^b).
4. Death from the individual desecration of the most holy things (15:31; cf. 10:1-2,6-7) and exile from the corporate defilement of the land (18:24-28; 20:22; cf. 26:27-39).
5. Sacrificial ritual as the means by which a holy God met with his people to sanctify and bless them
 - a. Blood of the sacrifices is the divinely instituted means of atonement: removal of impurity and gift of forgiveness (17:11; cf. 16:30).
 - b. The preparatory sacrifices.
 - The sin offering (*hatt'ath*) which **cleansed** the tabernacle and the people from impurity (16:15-19)
 - The guilt offering (*'asham*) which compensated for individual desecration and **reconsecrated** that person (5:14-16).
 - c. Through the daily burnt offering (*'olah*) God **accepted** the congregation (1:3-4) and **met** with them to bless them (9:4,6,22-23).
 - d. Through the consumption of the meat from the peace offerings (*zebach shelamim*) the Israelites were **accepted** by God as his guests and **ate holy food** from his altar (19:5)

6. God's conferral of his blessings on his people through their right worship of him: good harvests, peace, victory, growth, affluence, his gracious presence, and freedom (26:1-13)

F. Purpose

Leviticus is a handbook for priests to help them to carry out God's commandment in Leviticus 10:10-11

- By teaching God's provision for their acceptable performance of the divine service at the tabernacle
- By explaining God's interaction with them in the divine service
- By helping them to teach the people about their participation in God's holiness

4. Numbers

A. Names

1. Hebrew: *Bemidbar* (in the Wilderness) from the opening sentence
2. Greek: *Arithmoi* (Numbers)
3. English: *Numbers* from the two censuses in the book
 - The military census in Numbers 1-4
 - The census for the distribution of the land in Numbers 26

B. Location and Content

1. It stands between Leviticus, which deals with God's gift of worship to Israel, and Deuteronomy, which deals with God's gift of the land to Israel
2. It covers the journey from Sinai to Kadesh and from Kadesh to the Plains of Moab
3. It contains traditions of the time in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan
4. It ends with Israel poised to enter the Promised Land under Joshua.

C. Main Concerns

1. Organisation of Israel as a nation with God as its leader and Moses as his deputy
 - Tribal organisation: 12 tribes with heads and clans
 - Military organisation: tribal militia under Joshua
 - Liturgical organisation: priests, Levites and tribal heads
 - National organisation: council of 70/72 elders.
2. Preparation for life in Canaan
 - Legislation for the settlement in the land
 - Allotment of the land to tribes and clans
 - Liturgical calendar for worship in the land

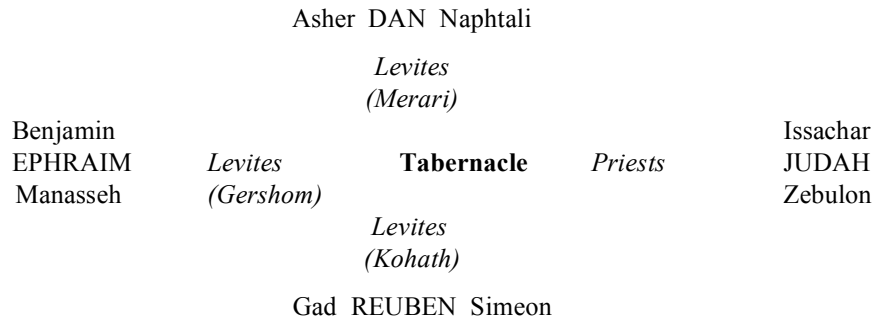
D. Structure

1. Organisation for the march of God's army from Sinai: 1-10.
 - Census and organisation of Israel as God's army (1-4).
 - Ritual purity and lay provision for the divine service (5:1-9:14)
 - ◆ Purity, holiness and blessing (5-6)

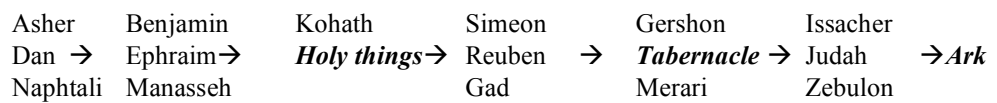
- ◆ Tribal provision for worship and God's revelation (7:1-8:4)
 - ◆ Responsibility of the Levites for Israel's purity (8:5-9:14)
 - God's leadership of his army on march (9:15-10:36)
2. Journey from Sinai to Kadesh: 11-12
 - Dissatisfaction of people and appointment of 70 elders (11)
 - Rebellion of Aaron and Miriam against Moses (12)
 3. Forty Years at Kadesh: 13-19
 - Rebellion of the spies (13-15)
 - Rebellion of the Korahites and Reubenites with legislation about the responsibility of the priests for the prevention of desecration (16-19)
 4. Journey from Kadesh to the Plains of Moab: 20-21.
 - The failure of Moses at Meribah (20:1-13)
 - Journey to Moab with death of Aaron and snake plague (20:14 - 21:20)
 - First conquests of Sihon and Og (21:21-35)
 5. Israel on the Plains of Moab: 22-36.
 - Blessing by Balaam: transformation of curse into blessing (22-24)
 - Apostasy at Baal Peor: foretaste of trouble in the land (25).
 - Second census for distribution of land (26).
 - New legislation (27-31)
 - ◆ Inheritance of daughters (27:1-11)
 - ◆ Joshua as the successor of Moses (27:12-23)
 - ◆ Liturgical calendar (28-29)
 - ◆ Votive offerings and booty (30-31)
 - Allotment of the land (32-36). See 33:50-56 and 36:9.
 - ◆ Transjordan to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (32)
 - ◆ Stages to Canaan (33)
 - ◆ Canaan to the other tribes with cities for the Levites (34-36)

E. Main Themes

1. Presence of the Lord with the Israelites as their King (23:21b)
 - Mode of God's presence
 - ◆ Glory-cloud (9:15-23; cf. 11:25; 12:5; 20:6)
 - ◆ Ark as his portable throne (10:33-36; cf. 14:39-45)
 - ◆ Tabernacle (7:89)
 - Symbolism of God's presence
 - ◆ Arrangement of camp (2:17; cf. 2:1-31; 3:14-38)



- ◆ Israel's marching order (10:11-13, 33-34; cf. 10:11-23)



2. Israel's participation in God's holiness

- Purity as the condition for life with their holy God
 - ◆ The camp (5:1-4)
 - ◆ The land (35:33-34)
 - ◆ Grades of access to his presence (18:2-7, 22-23)
- God as the source of blessing
 - ◆ Bestowal by the priests in the Aaronic benediction (6:22-27)
 - ◆ Protection from evil by God's blessing (22:12; 23:18-24)
- Grades of holiness from proximity to God
 - ◆ Holiness of the Israelites (15:34-41; cf. 16:3)
 - ◆ Holiness of a lay Nazirite (6:1-8)
 - ◆ Prevention of desecration by priests and Levites (18:2-7, 22-23)
 - Levites > the purity of lay people
 - Priests > the holiness of the sanctuary

3. Role of Moses as the supreme prophet, priest, and leader of Israel

- Moses as God's deputy (12:1-8): verbal contact with God (7:89)
- Moses as Israel's intercessor for rebellious Israel on *seven* occasions
 - ◆ People in trouble (11:1-3): prayer of Moses (11:2)
 - ◆ Lack of meat (11:4-35): prayer of Moses (11:10-23)
 - ◆ Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron against Moses as God's spokesman (12:1-16): prayer of Moses (12:13)
 - ◆ Rebellion of spies (13-14): model prayer of Moses (14:11-35)
 - ◆ Korah's challenge (16-17): prayer of Moses and Aaron (16:22) with prostration and Aaron's use of incense (16:45-48)
 - ◆ Lack of water at Meribah (20:1-13): prostration of Moses and Aaron (20:6).

- ◆ Impatience and the plague of fiery snakes (21:4-9): prayer of Moses (21:7).
- Delegation of responsibility by Moses
 - ◆ Religious matters
 - Responsibility of priests for the holy things (18:1, 5-7)
 - Levites' responsibility for tabernacle's purity (18:2-4)
 - ◆ Political matters
 - Military leadership to Joshua (27:12-23)
 - Judicial matters to a council of seventy elders (11:10-17, 24-25)
- Promise of future king (24:15-19)

G. Purpose

- To show how, despite all their sin, God never abandoned His people because of his mercy and the intercession of Moses
- To show the origin and nature of Israel's basic religious and social institutions
- To demonstrate the nature, requirements and results of God's presence with his people
- To differentiate between the holiness of priests, levites, nazirites and laity
- To show how God gave them their land and determined its allocation

5. Deuteronomy

1. Setting

a. Geographical

- The plains of Moab
- Across the Jordan outside the Promised Land

b. Temporal and historical

- The end of the forty years in the desert
- Before the death of Moses and the entry of into Canaan

2. Purpose in the Light of its Setting

Moses outlines God's terms for the gift of his land to his people and his conditions for their reception of his blessing in the land

3. Structure

a. The book consists of four farewell speeches of Moses with some concluding appendices.

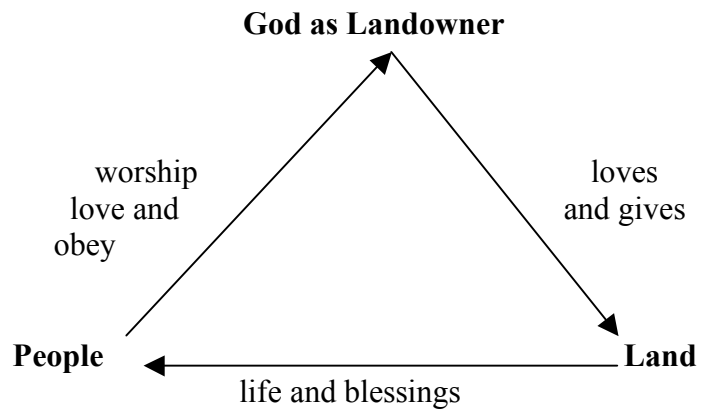
- Introduction: 1:1-5
- First speech: 1:6-4:43
- Second speech: 4:44-26:19
- Third speech: 27-28
- Fourth speech: 29-30
- Conclusion: 31-34

b. The speeches are arranged as a covenant enactment by analogy with a vassal treaty, in which God grants the land to his people.

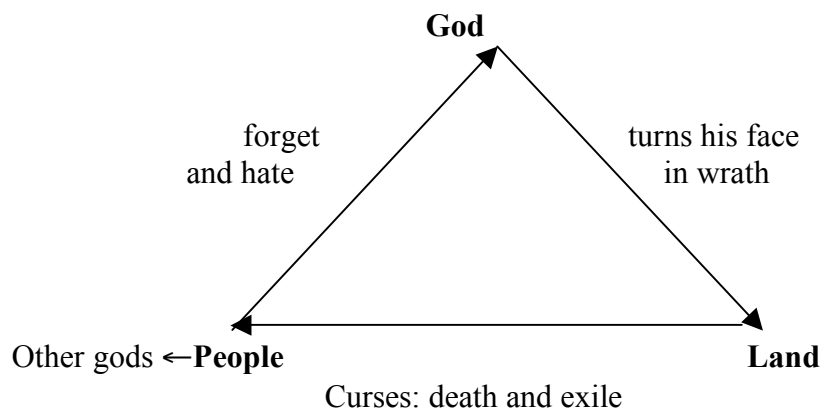
- Preamble and historical prologue : 1-4:43
- Stipulations : 4:44-26:19
 - ◆ Basic requirements (5-11)
 - ◆ Their application for life in the land (12-26)
- Blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience: 27-28
- Enactment of the covenant: 29-30
- Publication of the covenant: 31-34

4. God's Land Grant to Israel: the Covenant on the Plains of Moab

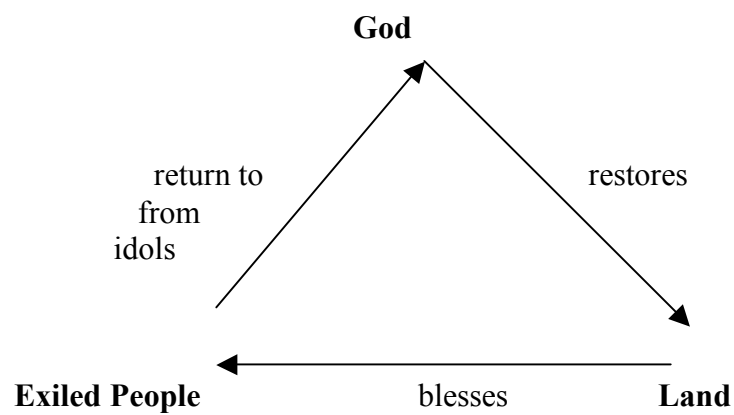
a. The cycle of blessing



b. The disruption of idolatry



c. The cycle of repentance



5. Main Themes

- God's covenant with his people in which he grants his land and its blessings to them
- God's love for his people and his passionate commitment to them in his land
- God's demand for their individual love and exclusive allegiance to him in the Promised Land
- God's provision of one central place of worship for Israel in the Promised Land
- Obedience to God as the condition for the enjoyment of blessing from God in the land
- Curse of infertility, death, and exile as a result of Israel's faithlessness to God in the Promised Land

4. Main Purpose

To show the Israelites how they could remain in God's land and enjoy his blessing in it

E. THE FORMER PROPHETS

1. The Nature of the Prophets

a. Role of the Prophet in the Old Testament

- Prophets as messengers of God and heralds of the heavenly king (Isa 6:8)
- Call by God (Amos 7:14-15) and inspiration by his Spirit (Zech 7:12; cf. Isa 48:16b)
- Spokesmen for God as is indicated by the stock formulae for their message
 - ◆ “The word of the Lord came to me” (Jer 2:1).
 - ◆ “Thus says the Lord” (Jer 2:2).
 - ◆ “Says the Lord” (RSV) or “declares the Lord” (NIV); lit. “whispering of the Lord” (Jer 2:3).
- Admission to God's heavenly council, so that they could both announce and explain God's decree (Jer 23:18,21-22; cf. Isa 6)
- Delivery of God's accusation, verdict and sentence (Mic 3:8)
- Creation of history by prophecy by speaking God's effectual word of judgment or salvation rather than mere prediction of future events (Isa 55:10-11; Jer 1:9-10).

b. Reception of God's Word by the Prophets

- Reception of God's word by audition (Jer 1:4-8; cf. Isa 50:41)
- Reception of God's word in a vision (Isa 2:1; cf. Num 24:15-16)
- Reception of message by false prophets in dreams (Jer 23:25-32)

c. Consultation of Prophets

- Influence of prophets on God's decisions through their prayers by virtue of their access to God's “council” (Hebrew *sod*)
- Request for intercession from people to “seek” and “secure” (Hebrew *darash*) a favourable word from God (Jer 37:3-10; cf. 1 Kgs 14:1-5, 2 Kgs 1:2-4), an “answer” to their prayers (Jer 23:35,37).
- Role of prophets as intercessors in Israel (1 Kgs 17:17-24)

d. Marks of True and False Prophecy

- a. If a part or all of a prophecy was fulfilled, then the prophet had spoken God's word (Deut 18:19-22. Note the pun on *dabar* as “word” and “event”).
- b. Test of fulfilment applied to prophecies of prosperity (Jer 28:5-9), since they were popular and paid well for (Jer 23:16-17; Mic 3:5-7,11).
- c. False prophets led people away from worship of the Lord (Deut 13:1-5).
- d. Those prophets who practiced and condoned adultery were false prophets (Jer 23:13-15; cf. 29:21-23).

2. Introduction to Joshua – 2 Kings

1. Division of the prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible into two parts
 - a. The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings
 - b. The Latter Prophets - four scrolls
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - The Twelve: Hosea - Malachi
2. Why does the Hebrew Bible regard the historical books from Joshua to 2 Kings as prophecy?
 - a. They give the origin of prophecy in Israel, as well as the historical background to the message of the written prophets.
 - Prophecies are always spoken into a specific historical situation.
 - They interpret that situation theologically and are to be interpreted historically in its light.
 - b. They show how the history of Israel in Canaan was made by the prophetic word of God.
3. Why do some modern scholars call the Former Prophets “the Deuteronomistic History”?
 - a. It was compiled during the period of exile in Babylon to explain why God took his land, monarchy, and temple away from his disobedient people.
 - b. It uses the book of Deuteronomy to give the theological reasons for the exile in Babylon.
 - c. It taught that God exiled his people from his land because of their persistent idolatry and apostasy as well as their improper worship of him in the high places and their neglect of the temple in Jerusalem.

3. Joshua

The Gift of the Land

1. Structure

- Occupation of Promised Land (1-12). Note the ark's role in 3-4 and 6
- Distribution of land (13-22). Note the summary in 14:1-5.
- Joshua's legacy: the covenant at Shechem (23-24)

2. Main Themes

- a. Role of Joshua as the successor of Moses (1:1-9)
- b. Gift of the land by God as Israel's place of rest (1:10-15; 21:43-44)
- c. God's fulfilment of his promises by the gift of the land (21:45; 23:14)
- d. Obedience to God's covenant as the condition for Israel's continuing existence in his land (23:1-13; 24:14-25)

3. Purpose

- To show that the land was God's gift to his people (24:13)
- To warn against apostasy from God in the Promised Land and the loss of it as their homeland (23:15-16)
- To act as an introduction to the whole prophetic history

4. Judges

The Need for the Monarchy

1. Structure

- a. Need for the judges in 1:1 - 3:6: note the summary in 2:11-23.
- b. The six part cycle of deliverance by the judges in 3:7-16:31: note the six declarations of judgment in 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6 and 13:1.
 - Othniel from the Mesopotamians (3:7-11)
 - Ehud and Shamgar from the Moabites and Philistines (3:12-31)
 - Deborah and Barak from the king of Hazor (4:1 - 5:31)
 - Gideon from the Midianites with subsequent civil war (6:1 - 10:5)
 - Jephthah from the Ammonites (10:6 - 12:15)
 - Samson from the Philistines (13:1 - 16:31)
- c. Internal disunity in 17-21: note the remark in 17:6 and 21:25.
 - Tribal idolatry (17-18)
 - Inter-tribal justice (19-21)

2. Main Themes

- a. The recurring apostasy of Israel (8:33-35)
- b. Their subsequent judgment and salvation by God (10:6-16)
- c. The gift of God's spirit to the judges who saved the people from oppression by their enemies (3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25)

Rest in the land

(obedience)

(apostasy)

**Deliverance by
judges**

**Oppression by
enemies**

(prayer)

3. Purpose

- a. To call the Israelites from their apostasy (2:1-3; 6:7-10)
- b. To prove the need for a king to organise worship and administer justice between the tribes (17:6; 18:1; 21:25)

5. First and Second Samuel

The Foundation of the Monarchy

1. History

- a. These books show how the monarchy arose in Israel.
- b. Time span: 1060 BC-970 BC.
- c. Main dates
 - 1050 BC destruction of Shiloh
 - 1020-1000 BC Saul's reign
 - 1000-961 BC David's reign

2. Structure

- a. God's rejection of Shiloh and his establishment of Samuel as Israel's prophet and judge: 1 Sam 1-7
- b. God's institution of the monarchy by God through Samuel: 1 Sam 8-10
- c. God's rejection of Saul and his choice of David as king: 1 Sam 11-31
- d. The kingship of David: 2 Sam 1-24
 - Election of David as king (2 Sam 1-5)
 - God's covenant with David (2 Sam 6-9)
 - God's judgment on David and his family (2 Sam 10-20)
 - Summary: David the intercessor, singer and altar builder (2 Sam 21-24)

3. Purpose

- a. Why does the story of kingship begin in 1 Sam 1-4 with the call of Samuel, the judgment of Eli, and the loss of the ark?
 - Samuel as the last of the judges, the forerunners of the monarchy (1 Sam 7:5-17)
 - Samuel as the father of prophecy and king-maker in Israel (1 Sam 3:20-21)
 - God's judgment on Eli as a prelude to his establishment of a new dynasty of priests from Zadok in Jerusalem, rather than from Eli at Shiloh (1 Sam 2:35)
 - Loss of the ark as a prelude to its relocation by David in Jerusalem, the new centre of worship in Israel (1 Sam 4:11,21-22)

- c. Why does the story of kingship end with the construction of the altar on the threshing floor of Araunah? (2 Sam 24:18-25).
 - Legitimacy of the altar and the temple in Jerusalem
 - Connection between the monarchy and the altar in Jerusalem
 - King as the patron of the temple who provided the sacrifices that averted God's wrath from his kingdom and ensured his blessing on it

- c. The book shows the origin of the monarchy and the royal dynasty of David in Israel and outlines the role of Israel's kings as patrons of worship in Jerusalem.

4. Role of Three Prophets in the Foundation of the Monarchy

- a. Samuel's acts
 - Judgment of Eli's family (1 Sam 3:12-14)
 - Choice of Saul as king (1 Sam 9-12)
 - Rejection of Saul (1 Sam 13,15)
 - Anointing of David (1 Sam 16:1-13)
 - Death of Saul (1 Sam 28)

- b. Nathan's acts
 - God's covenant with David (2 Sam 7:1-17)
 - Punishment of David for adultery and murder (2 Sam 12:1-14)
 - Naming of Solomon (2 Sam 12:24-25)

- c. Gad's act
 - God's judgment on David for the census and command to build the altar for the temple (2 Sam 24)

1. Theology of Kingship in Israel

- a. Divine kingship in pagan countries
 - ◆ King: god or semi-divine being
 ↓ makes laws as priest/prophet
 - ◆ People: subjects of king and slaves of gods

- b. Israelite kingship
 - ◆ The Lord as the only God
 ↓ makes law (through Moses and the prophets)
 - ◆ King: God's servant + *messiah*: deputy and anointed vassal
 ↓ administers God's law in worship, justice and defence
 - ◆ People of Israel

- c. God's kingship as the reason for his original provision of judges rather than kings (1 Sam 8:6-22; 10:17-19; cf. Judg 8:22-23)

- d. God's establishment of a constitutional monarchy with the king as his servant and anointed vassal (*messiah*), subject to him and his law (1 Sam 12:12-18; 2 Sam 7:14; 22:21-25; cf. Deut 17:14-20)

- e. God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7:1-17 with its charter for the Davidic dynasty and all subsequent Messianic prophecies
 - A dynasty (house) of kings from David
 - David's seed as his successor in the kingship
 - David's seed as the builder God's temple/house
 - Permanence of his seed's kingship and throne
 - David's seed as God's royal son: God as his Father
 - God's eternal commitment to David's dynasty despite any king's sin
 - The permanence of David's dynasty, kingship and throne before God

- f. Responsibility of king as God's servant for public worship, social justice and national security in Israel (2 Sam 23:1-7; cf. Ps 72)

- g. Rejection of Saul for sacrilege by acting as a priest (1 Sam 13:13-14) and misappropriating the holy things of God (1 Sam 15:22-23)

- h. David as a model king with
 - Concern for the ark (2 Sam 6)
 - Prayer for the monarchy (2 Sam 7:18-29)
 - Respect for the priests (2 Sam 8:17; cf. 1 Sam 22:20-23; 23:4-12)
 - Acceptance of God's word of judgment (2 Sam 12:1-23)
 - Intercession for the land (2 Sam 21:1-14)
 - Performance of praise (2 Sam 22)
 - Building of the altar in Jerusalem (2 Sam 24:18-25)

- i. Prophets as intermediaries between God and his king (1 Sam 12:19-25)

6. First and Second Kings

The History of the Monarchy

1. History

- a. Time span of 400 years: 961-560 BC
- b. Main dates
 - Division of David's Kingdom: 922 BC.
 - Elijah: c 850 BC
 - Uzziah's death and Isaiah's call: 742 BC
 - Destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyrians: 721 BC
 - Deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians: 701 BC
 - Josiah's reign: 640-609 BC
 - ◆ Deuteronomic reform: 621 BC
 - ◆ Destruction of Nineveh: 612 BC
 - ◆ Death of Josiah at Megiddo: 609 BC
 - Capture of Jerusalem by Babylonians: 597 BC.
 - Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians: 587-6 BC.
 - Liberation and promotion of Jehoiachin: 560 BC.
- c. Seven violent northern revolutions
 - Baasha: 900 BC
 - Zimri: 876 BC
 - Omri: 876 BC
 - Jehu: 842 BC
 - Shallum: 745 BC
 - Menahem: 745 BC
 - Hoshea: 732 BC
- d. Dynasties in the Northern Kingdom
 - Jeroboam (922-901) > Nadab (901-900)
 - Baasha (900-877) > Elah (877-876).
 - Omri (876-869) > Ahab (869-850) > Ahaziah (850-849) > Jehoram (849-842)
 - Jehu (842-815) > Jehoahaz (815-801) > Jehoash (801-786) > Jereboam II (786-746) > Zechariah (746-745)
 - Menahem (745-738) > Pekahiah (738-737) > Pekah (737-732)

2. Structure

- a. Succession of Solomon and building of the temple: 1 Kgs 1-11
- d. Divided kingdom: 1 Kgs 11 - 2 Kgs 17
 - Split of the northern kingdom Israel
 - Idolatry and apostasy of its kings
 - Relationship of Israel with Judah
 - Work of Elijah and Elisha in combating idolatry and apostasy
 - Destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians
- e. Destruction of Jerusalem
 - Hezekiah's reform and Jerusalem's deliverance (18-20)
 - Apostasy of Manasseh (21)
 - Josiah's reformation (22-23:30)
 - Destruction of Jerusalem and deportation to Babylon (23:31-25:21)
 - Revolt of Nethaniah and liberation of Jehoiachin (25:22-30)

3. Main Themes

- a. The creative and critical role of the prophetic word of God in shaping the history of the monarchy in Israel
 - Nathan: succession of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:5-40)
 - Ahijah: division of the kingdom by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:29-39) and the end of his dynasty (1 Kgs 14:1-16)
 - Man of God: destruction of Bethel and its altar (1 Kgs 13:1-6)
 - Jehu: death of Baasha (1 Kgs 16:1-4)
 - Elijah: anointing of Jehu (1 Kgs 19:15-18); and the end of the Omri's dynasty (1 Kgs 21:17-29)
 - Elisha: anointing of Jehu (1 Kgs 9:1-3)
 - Isaiah: defeat of the Assyrians (2 Kgs 19:14-34) and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (2 Kgs 20:16-19).
 - Huldah: destruction of Judah and Jerusalem (2 Kgs 22:16-20).
 - No mention of Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk, apart from the summaries at 2 Kgs 17:13-23; 21:10-15, and 24:2-4.
- b. The temple as God's earthly residence and palace
 - God's promise to reside among his people in the temple as long as Solomon and his successors remained faithful to him (1 Kgs 6:11-13)
 - God's presence at the temple in the glory cloud (1 Kgs 8:10-13)

- God's name rather than an idol as the means by which he made himself available to Israel (1 Kgs 8:16, 29; 9:3)
 - The temple as the place of prayer for Israel (1 Kgs 8:27-30)
 - Destruction of the temple and exile for the failure of the kings to promote the right worship according to his law (1 Kgs 9:1-9)
- c. God's commitment to David's successors and Jerusalem because of his covenant with David
- God's preservation of the dynasty of David and the city of Jerusalem because of his covenant with David (1 Kgs 9:4-5; 11:31-32; cf. 1 Kgs 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6)
 - David as the model for his successors and the standard for their assessment (1 Kgs 11:4; cf. 1 Kgs 15:3,11; 2 Kgs 14:2; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2)
- d. Idolatry as the reason for the downfall of the Northern Kingdom (1 Kgs 14:14-16; 2 Kgs 17:21-23) and of Judah (2 Kgs 21:10-15; cf. 2 Kgs 23:26-27; 24:3)
- (1) The sin of Jereboam: promotion of idolatry and incorrect worship (1 Kgs 12:26-33)
- Forbidden idols at Bethel and Dan (cf. 1 Kgs 14:9)
 - Unauthorised shrines in the high places (cf. 1 Kgs 13:32)
 - Unauthorised altar at Bethel (cf. 1 Kgs 13:1-6; 2 Kgs 22:15-18)
 - Unauthorised time for the Feast of Tabernacles
 - Unauthorised priests who were not Levites (cf. 1 Kgs 13:33)
 - Jereboam as unauthorised high priest at Bethel (cf. 1 Kgs 13:1)
- (2) Jereboam as the negative yardstick for the condemnation of evil kings (1 Kgs 15:26,30; cf. 1 Kgs 16:7,13,19,26,30-31; 21:22; 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:3; 10:28-31; 13:2,11; 14:24; 15:9,18,24,18)
- (3) Escalation from idolatry to apostasy with pagan gods
- Ahab who outdid Jereboam by his introduction of the worship of Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 16:31-33)
 - Manasseh who not only introduced the worship of Baal and Asherah in Judah and put an idol of Asherah in the temple at Jerusalem (2 Kgs 21:3,7) but also practised astrology (2 Kgs 21:3) and spiritism (2 Kgs 21:6)

(4) Commendation of some Judean kings for their promotion of orthodoxy

- Asa who attacked idolatry and cult prostitution (1 Kgs 15:11-15)
- Jehoshaphat who eliminated cult prostitution (1 Kgs 22:46)
- Joash who renovated the temple (2 Kgs 12:1-16)
- Hezekiah who began to centralise worship in Jerusalem by closing down the high places with their idolatrous practices (2 Kgs 18:2-6,22; cf. 1 Kgs 14:23-24; 15:14; 22:43; 2 Ki 12:3; 14:4; 16:4; 17:9-13; 21:3)
- Josiah who used Deuteronomy to promote the comprehensive reformation of worship in the realm (2 Kgs 23:1-25)
 - ◆ National covenant to worship the Lord according to his law
 - ◆ Removal of idolatrous objects and cult prostitution from the temple
 - ◆ Destruction of the high places and deposition of their priests
 - ◆ Destruction of Jereboam's altar and Asherah pole at Bethel
 - ◆ National celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem
 - ◆ Removal of spiritism from the land

4. Main Purpose

- To show the people in exile why God allowed the Assyrians to destroy the kingdom of Israel (2 Kgs 17:18-20) and the Babylonians to destroy the kingdom of Judah (2 Kgs 23:26-27; 24:20).
- To show that hope for Israel's restoration as God's people lay in God's covenant with Abraham (2 Kgs 14:26-27) and David (2 Kgs 8:19)

5. Summary of Samuel and Kings

a. Main Themes

- The origin, character, and failure of kingship in Israel
- God's unconditional commitment to the dynasty of David
- The far-reaching consequences of David's faithfulness to God and of Jereboam's idolatry
- The origin and destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem
- The gradual centralisation of worship and prayer at Jerusalem
- The importance of correct worship according to the teaching of Moses and the prophets
- The origins and development of prophecy
- The creative and critical role of the prophetic word of God in shaping the destiny of Israel

b. Purpose

Under the influence of Deuteronomy and of prophets such as Jeremiah, this history was written for the people in exile

- To explain how God had originally given them and so could again give them their land, kings, and temple
- To show why God had allowed the Babylonians to conquer his land, depose his king, destroy his temple, and exile his people

F. THE LATTER PROPHETS

1. Isaiah

God's Plans for Zion

1. Subject Matter

- a. Vision of God's plan for Jerusalem his holy city (Isa 1:1; 2:1)
- b. Isaiah as a visionary prophet with God's call to be his royal herald (Isa 6:1-13)
 - Vision of heavenly king with angel courtiers (1-4)
 - Purification of Isaiah's lips to speak God's holy word (5-7)
 - Commission of Isaiah with message of judgement on the deaf, blind, obstinate people (8-9)
 - Purpose of judgment (10-13)
 - ◆ Double decimation of the population
 - ◆ New beginning from the remnant as the holy seed
- d. Popular misconception of Zion as God's capital city in his world empire from misinterpreting Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 46, 72, 76, and 110
 - God: victor and ruler over all other gods
 - Davidic king: divinely appointed emperor with a world empire
 - Israel: ruling nation in God's empire.
 - Jerusalem: capital city in God's earthly empire.
 - Nations
 - ◆ God's rebellious enemies who were agents of chaos
 - ◆ God's subjects who were to serve God by obeying his king
 - Victory in war: God's defeat of his enemies through his king
 - Peace: Israel's disarmament of the nations and rule over them
- d. Challenge to this imperial theology from historical events
 - (1) Why was Jerusalem dominated, captured, destroyed, rebuilt and ruled by the apparent enemies of God?
 - (2) How could God fail to keep his promises about his capital city and allow his holy temple-palace to be destroyed?
 - (3) When and how could his people make any sense of God's seemingly senseless behaviour?
- e. Isaiah's counter-vision

- Zion with its temple as the place for international pilgrimage and worship rather than as the centre of God's world-empire (2:1-4)
- The rebellious Israelites as God's enemies (1:21-24)
- God's purging of Jerusalem (1:25) as a prelude to his judgment of the rebellious world
- God's deliverance of Zion's citizens from the Assyrians and from exile in Babylon as a prelude to the salvation of all penitent sinners in Zion
- Fulfilment of God's promises about earthly Jerusalem in heavenly Jerusalem (65-66)

2. Historical Background to Isaiah

The book of Isaiah focuses on the **three** great crises in the history of Jerusalem

a. Jerusalem in the Assyrian period (Isaiah 1–39)

- Call of Isaiah in 742 BC (6:1-3)
- Syro-Ephaimite War against Judah under Ahaz to form an anti-Assyrian alliance in 735 BC (7-8 and 28-31)
- Fall of the Northern Kingdom to the Assyrians in 721 BC (28:1-6)
- Assyrian siege of Jerusalem and its deliverance under Hezekiah in 701 BC (9-11 and 36-39; cf. 14:24-27)

b. Captivity in Babylon (Isaiah 40–55)

- Capture of Jerusalem and first deportation with Jehoiachin in 597 BC (cf. 22:1-25)
- Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587-586 BC
- Liberation of Jehoiachin in 560 BC
- Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BC (41:1-4,25-29; 44:24–45:7; 48:14-16; cf. 21:1-10; 13:1–14:21).

c. Restoration of Jerusalem (Isaiah 56-66)

- Return from exile under Sheshbazzar in 537 BC (cf. 48:20-22; 52:11-12; 55:12-13; 64:8-11; 66:1)
- Dedication of the second temple in 515 BC

3. Range of Isaiah's Prophecies

- Scope of prophecies: from 742 BC, when Isaiah was called, to about 500 BC, after the temple had been rebuilt
- Modern theory of two or three authors of Isaiah
 - Isaiah of Jerusalem: chapters 1–35
 - Deutero-Isaiah in Babylon: chapters 40–55 (mention of Cyrus in 44:28; 45:1-13)
 - Trito-Isaiah (?): chapters 56–66

- c. Focus of the book: the place of Jerusalem in God's plans for the world
- d. Ultimate fulfilment of these prophecies at the end of the world and the new creation in Isaiah 63–66

4. Three Parts of Isaiah

a. Isaiah 1–39: Zion and the Assyrian crisis

(1) Structure of 1-39

- God's remedy for Israel's sickness and his liturgical purpose for purified Zion (1-6 with 1:2–2:4 or 1:2–4:6 as an introduction to the whole book)
- God's use of Assyria to judge the northern kingdom and his guarantee to save faithful Zion (7-12)
- God's use of Assyria to judge the nations and to promote his liturgical mission for Zion (13-27)
- Disaster for the opponents of God's strategy and hope for the righteous in Zion (28-33 with six woes in 28:1; 29:1,15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1)
- Instruction to the nations about God's judgment on Edom as a typically godless nation and about his glorification of Zion (34-35)
- The deliverance of Zion from the Assyrians and the announcement of exile in Babylon (36-39). Note how all this, except 38:9-20 and 39:18, comes from 2 Kings 18:13ff and how chapter 39 is the bridge to 40-55.

(2) Main Themes of Isaiah 1-39

(a) God's purpose for Zion as the place of international worship (2:1-5; cf. 24:1–25:9; 26:1-9; 30:19-26; 33:5-6,13-24)

- Zion's glorification (4:2-6)
 - ◆ Future king as a fruitful tree for Israel (2)
 - ◆ People of Zion as holy priests cleansed by God's Spirit (3-4)
 - ◆ Whole city as God's temple and the people's refuge (5-6)
- Zion's transformation by the Lord's advent and presence (35:1-10)
 - ◆ Wilderness Zion → fertile land with orchards and forest (1-4)
 - Weakness → strength
 - Fear → courage
 - ◆ Desert Zion → oasis (5-7)
 - Blind → seers of God
 - Deaf → hearers of God

- Lame → walkers with God
 - Dumb → singers of God
 - ◆ Holy way to God's presence in Zion (8-10)
 - Forbidden to unclean, unbelievers, predators
 - Open for the triumphant return of God's redeemed people

- (b) God's judgment on Jerusalem for the pollution of its worship by injustice (1:10-17, 21-23; 5:1-7)

- (c) God's judgment of the whole world and the heavenly hosts for rebellion and violence (24:1-5; 18^b-23; 26:20–27:1)

- (d) Faith in God's presence in Zion for deliverance rather than reliance on foreign alliances (7:1-9; 28:14-16; 30:15-18)

- (e) The promise of a second David
 - Immanuel (7:10-17)
 - ◆ Born of a virgin mother: Hezekiah or the Messiah
 - ◆ Sign of God's presence to judge and save
 - Birth of a second Solomon as Prince of Peace (9:2-7)
 - ◆ Dawn of new day for oppressed people (2)
 - ◆ Deliverance by him as cause of rejoicing (3-5)
 - ◆ Enthronement as God's agent (6)
 - ◆ Peaceful rule based on God's justice, righteousness and zeal (7)
 - The new shoot from Jesse's stump (11:1-10)
 - ◆ New king from the dead stump of Jesse (1)
 - ◆ Empowerment by God's Spirit for justice, security, and worship (2-3^a)
 - ◆ Vindication of the poor and condemnation of the wicked (3^b-5)
 - ◆ Restoration of paradise by the knowledge of the Lord through worship in Zion (6-9)
 - ◆ Leader of the nations with God's glory as his place of residence (10)

- (f) God's banquet for death's destruction by him on Mt Zion (25:6-9)

- (g) Return of holy remnant to God in Zion (10:20-23; cf. 11:11-16; 35:10)

b. Isaiah 40–55: Zion and the Babylonian exile

(1) Structure

Note the commands to leave Babylon in 48:20 and 52:11 that culminate in 55:12.

- God's preparation of a way to bring the people from exile back to Zion (40)
- God's use of Cyrus to free his people and rebuild Zion (41-48)
- God's use of his servant to restore his people and to fulfil the liturgical mission of Zion to the nations (49-55)

(2) Main Themes of Isaiah 40-55

(a) Return to Jerusalem as a second exodus (40:1-11; cf. 43:14-21; 51:9-11; 57:7-12).

- God's command for Zion's restoration to the angels in the heavenly court (40:1-2)
- Angel's command for construction of the Lord's way (40:3-5)
- Angel's command to the prophet (40:6^a)
- Prophet's objection: futility of proclamation (40:6^b-7^b)
- Angel's answer: power of God's word (40:7^b-8)
- Angel's message to Zion/prophet for cities of Judah (40:9-11)

(b) Cyrus as God's messiah for Zion's restoration (44:24-45:13; cf. 41:1-4,25; 46:8-11; 48:14-16)

(c) God's trial of the pagan gods for fraud (41:21-29; cf. 43:8-13; 47:6-8)

- Judges: hearers
- Parties: God v pagan gods (21-23)
- Dispute: claim to divinity by pagan gods (23)
- Claim: power to foretell events and act in history (22-23)
- Accuser: the Lord, the king of Jacob (21)
- Charge: fraud (24)
- Accused: pagan gods with their devotees (21-22,29)
- Evidence: rise of Cyrus (25-28)
- Verdict: pagan gods as impotent impostors (29)

(d) Prosperity of Zion: built and defended by God (54:11-17; cf. 44:1-5; 49:14-26; 51:1-8; 54:1-3)

(e) Salvation of the nations: confession of allegiance to the Lord (45:22-25; cf. 42:5-9; 45:14-17; 49:6-7,22-23; 51:4-6)

- (f) The role of God's servant as outlined in four servant songs.
- Presentation by God of his servant: 42:1-4 (5-9)
 - ◆ Identity: chosen servant (king/ prophet)
 - ◆ Power: God's Spirit
 - ◆ Task: extension of God's rule over the nations
 - ◆ Character: gentle with oppressed and faithful to God
 - ◆ Method of operation: teaching of God's word
 - Servant's report of his mission to the nations: 49:1-6
 - ◆ Commission by God as his agent (1-3)
 - ◆ Apparent failure with reliance on God for vindication (4)
 - ◆ Commission by God to save Israel and the Gentiles (5-6)
 - Confession by servant of confidence in God 50:4-9
 - ◆ Daily reception of God's word (4)
 - ◆ Obedience despite persecution (5-6)
 - ◆ Reliance on God for vindication (7-9)
 - Description of the servant's suffering : 52:13 - 53:12
 - ◆ God's report of his exaltation: 52:13-15
 - ◆ People's report of his sacrificial death: 53:1-10)
 - ◆ God's appraisal of his work: 53:11-12

- (g) Participation of Zion in the messianic covenant (55:1-7)
- Invitation to feast at God's banquet by hearing his word (1-2)
 - Zion's inclusion in God's covenant with David and his mission to the nations (3-5)
 - Call to nations to seek the Lord's pardon in Zion (6-7)

c. Isaiah 56–66: Post-exilic and heavenly Zion

Problem: delay in Zion's promised deliverance and glorification

(1) Structure

- God's vindication of righteous Jews and Gentiles in Zion (56-59)
- God's glorification of Zion for international worship (60-62)
- God's creation of Jerusalem as his temple in a new heaven and earth after his final judgment (63-66)

(2) Main Themes of Isaiah 56-66

- Sin as the obstacle of Zion's deliverance (59:1-3,9,12-15; cf. 58:1-12; 64:5-7)

- God's coming to Zion as saviour and judge (59:15^b-21; cf. 57:14-21; 62:10-12; 63:1-6; 66:6,14-16)
- Mission of the Messiah as Zion's comforter (61:1-3).
 - His anointing by God's Spirit (1^a)
 - His proclamation of a divine amnesty (1b-3^a)
 - ◆ Charity to the poor and healing of broken hearted
 - ◆ Release of prisoners and slaves
 - ◆ Pardon and restoration of evildoers
 - ◆ Comfort for mourners over Zion's bereavement
 - Transformation from lamentation to praise (3^b)
 - Appointment of people to reveal God's presence (3^c)
- God's glorification of Zion in his new creation (60:1-7; 65:17-25; cf. 58:8-14; 60:8-22; 62:1-12; 65:13-16; 66:10-14)
- Performance of worship by the Gentiles with the Israelites in Zion (66:18-23; cf. 56:6-8; 60:4-14)
 - God's gathering of Gentiles to his presence in Zion (18)
 - God's sending of Gentiles as heralds to the nations (19)
 - Presentation of Jews by the Gentiles to the Lord (20)
 - Selection of priests from the Gentiles (21)
 - Continuance of God's people in the new creation (22)
 - Continual adoration of God by all humanity (23)
- Royal priesthood of all God's people (61:5-7; cf. 66:21)

5. Main Themes of Isaiah

- Kingship of God and his presence in Zion.
- Eternal destiny of Zion and its role in God's plan with the world
- God's judgment of the wicked, beginning with the Israelites and extending to all creation
- Israel's exile from God's presence and the return of a holy remnant from exile
- God's defeat of his enemies with his unmasking of the heathen gods
- God's deliverance of Zion and the revelation of his glory to the whole world in Zion
- Redemptive role of God's suffering servant
- Creation of a new heaven and earth for the citizens of Zion
- God's salvation of the Gentiles through Zion and their worship of God in Zion
- Universal justice, righteousness and peace established by God through his messianic king in Zion

6. Purpose

The book of Isaiah shows

- Why God allowed his city to be destroyed and its citizens to be exiled
- What God's plans were for Zion in his dealings with the whole world
- When and how his promises for Zion would be fulfilled

2. Jeremiah

End of Israel as a Nation

1. Historical Context (627-583 BC)

- a. First period: 627-622 BC (Josiah's reign 640-609 BC)
 - (1) Politics
 - Decline of Assyrian influence and loss of political independence for Judah
 - Beginning of religious reformation in 622 BC (2 Kings 23)
 - (2) Subject matter: religious syncretism and hope for the restoration of the Northern Kingdom
- b. Second period: 609-597 BC (Jehoiakim's reign)
 - (1) Politics
 - Death of Josiah in battle against Pharaoh Necho in 609 BC
 - Defeat of Assyria by Babylonians and anti- Babylonian alliance with Egypt
 - Capture of Jerusalem and deportation of Jehoiachin in 597 BC by the Babylonians
 - (2) Subject matter: destruction of Judah for idolatry and injustice
- c. Third period: 597-587 BC (Zedekiah's reign)
 - (1) Politics
 - Appointment of Zedekiah as Babylonian vassal and alliance with Egypt against Babylon
 - Destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC
 - (2) Material: Subject matter: call for surrender to Babylon and hope for those in exile
- d. Fourth period: 586-583 BC
 - (1) Politics
 - Deportation of ruling classes except Jeremiah
 - Assassination of Gedaliah the Babylonian governor and escape of rebels with Jeremiah to Egypt
 - (2) Subject matter: repentance

2. Structure

- a. Call of Jeremiah (1)
- b. God's judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (2-24)
 - Consequences of apostasy (2-6).
See 6:27-30 for the task of Jeremiah
 - Consequences of false worship (7-10)
 - The broken covenant and the suffering of Jeremiah (11-20)
 - God's condemnation of Judah's leaders (21-24)
- c. Hope of restoration after judgment (25-51)
 - Judah's judgment as a prelude to universal judgment (25). Note the insertion by the LXX of chapters 46–51.
See 25:15-18,27-31.
 - Jeremiah and the false prophets (26-29)
 - The Book of Consolation (30-33)
See 30:1-4,8-11.
 - Incidents from the reign of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah (34-39)
 - Experiences of Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem (40-45)
 - Oracles of Jeremiah against the nations (46-51)
See 46:1.
- d. Fall of Jerusalem (52): appendix from 2 Kings 24:18 - 25:20 to show that the prophecies of Jeremiah came true.

3. Symbolic Acts of Jeremiah

- Buried waist cloth: 13:1-11 (God's rejection of his corrupt people)
- Exploding wineskins: 13:12-14 (self-destruction of evil)
- Jeremiah's celibacy and avoidance of weddings and funerals: 16:1-13 (sign of the breakdown of social order)
- Potter at work: 18:1-12 (work of God in reshaping his people)
- Smashing of a clay pot: 19:1-15 (destruction of Judah and Jerusalem)
- Wearing of wooden yoke and iron yoke: 27:1 - 28:17 (surrender to Babylon)
- Purchase of land in occupied territory: 32:1-44 (future repossession of the land)
- Offer of wine to the Rechabites who had vowed not to drink any alcoholic drink: 35:1-19 (obedience to God)
- Laying of two stones in Egypt as the site for Nebuchadnezzar's throne: 43:8-13 (capture of Egypt)
- Commission to Seraiah to throw a scroll with God's judgments in the Euphrates: 51:59-64 (God's judgment on Babylon)

4. Main Themes

- Jeremiah's authority to break down and build up God's people (1:4-19)
- God's judgment on Judah and Jerusalem for their disobedience (11:1-17; cf. 4:11-18; 7:1-20; 7:7-9; 14:1-16; 16:10-13)
- Judah's need for repentance and her refusal to repent (8:4-7; cf. 5:1-5; 7:21-28; 18:1-11)
- Failure of prophets, priests and kings to correct Judah's evil-doing (8:8-12; 22:1-5; cf. 5:30-31; 21:1-14; 22:11-17; 23:9-40)
- Desecration of the temple and its resultant destruction (7:1-15)
- Suffering of Jeremiah with his people and God (4:19-22; cf. 8:18 - 9:1; 10:19-21; 14:17-18). Note the confessions of Jeremiah in 11:18-20; 12:1-6; 15:10-12,15-18; 17:14-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-12,14-18.
- Return from exile in Babylon after seventy years (29:10-14; cf. 31:1-14; 33:1-16)
- Promise of a new David to lead the people back from exile and to establish God's righteousness (23:1-8)
- God's new covenant with Israel (31:31-34; cf. 32:37-41; 33:23-26)
- Worship of reunified Israel with the nations in Jerusalem (3:15-18)

5. Purpose

The book of Jeremiah was compiled after his death by the scribes, like Baruch (36) and Seraiah (51:59-64), who were also responsible for the great prophetic history from Joshua to 2 Kings

- To show why God rejected his people and allowed them to be taken into exile (5:18-19)
- To call God's people to repentance and to encourage them to hope in God for the restoration of Jerusalem (50:4-5)

3. Ezekiel

The Destruction of the Temple

1. Setting

- Babylon from 592-587 BC: prophecies of judgment on Judah in Ezekiel 4-24 and the nations in Ezekiel 25-32
- Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC: prophecies of restoration in Ezekiel 33 - 48

2. Structure

- a. God's judgment on the people left in Judah (1-32)
 - (1) Call of Ezekiel as Judah's watchman (1-3)
 - (2) God's judgment on his people from defiling his holy things (4-24)
 - (3) God's judgment on Ammon, Moab, Philistia, Tyre, and Egypt for their mistreatment of his people (25-32). Note the absence of Babylon.
- b. Promised restoration of Israel and its temple (33-48)
 - (1) Role of Ezekiel as a watchman (33)
 - (2) God's restoration of Israel (34-37)
 - (3) God's vindication of his holiness before the nations by the defeat of Gog (38-39)
 - (4) Description of a new temple and its services (40-48)

3. Vision of God's Chariot Throne in 1-3, 8-11, and 43:1-5

- a. God's glory
 - Seated on the throne with the appearance of a person with a body
 - Surrounded by radiance like a rainbow
 - Resembled gleaming bronze above the waist and fire below the waist
 - Revealed in voice like thunder (1:25,28)
- b. God's throne
 - Blue like a sapphire
 - Seat like the firmament of the sky with the colour of crystal or ice
 - Four cherubim as throne bearers that held up the seat

- ◆ Each with a human form
- ◆ Each with faces of a man, lion, ox, and eagle
- ◆ Each with two wings to bear the throne and two wings to cover themselves
- ◆ All enclosed what looked like a blazing furnace
- ◆ Movement like flashes of lightning
- Four multi-directional wheels that were propelled by the Spirit
 - ◆ One wheel for each creature
 - ◆ Each able to move in any direction
 - ◆ Each intersected by another wheel
 - ◆ Each with rim full of eyes
 - ◆ Each with the appearance of sparkling chrysolite

4. Symbolic Actions of Ezekiel

- Eating of scroll (2:10; 3:1-9,14)
- Dumbness until the fall of Jerusalem (3:24-27; 33:21-22; cf. 24:26-27)
- Charade on the siege of Jerusalem (4-5)
 - ◆ First stage
 - Brick as Jerusalem
 - Models: siege wall with mound, camps and rams
 - Ezekiel as enemy
 - Iron plate: siege of Jerusalem
 - ◆ Second stage
 - Ezekiel lying on his side against the city
 - Left side for 390 days for the guilt of Israel
 - Right side 40 days for the guilt of Judah
 - Total of 430 days for the years from Solomon in 968 BC to the end of the captivity in 538 BC
 - Ezekiel tied down so that he couldn't move
 - Siege diet
 - 0.2 kg of grain cooked with cow manure
 - 0.6 litre of water
 - ◆ Third stage
 - Ezekiel's shaving of his hair with its division into three parts before the siege
 - Disposal of the hair at the end of the siege
 - 1/3 burnt in the city
 - 1/3 chopped up by sword around the city
 - 1/3 scattered to the wind with a few strands saved and tucked in his clothes
- Charade of Ezekiel as a prisoner of war (12:1-20)
- Charade of the king of Babylon at the crossroads: Ammon or Judah (21:18-27)
- Prohibition of mourning at wife's death (24:15-27)

5. Main Themes

- Ezekiel as Israel's watchman to call the people to repentance (3:16-21; cf. 33:1-20)
- Rebellion of Israel with its defilement of Jerusalem and the temple (5:5-12; cf. 23:37-39 in 23:1-41)
- Need for purification with the fire of God's wrath (22:17-22 in 22:1-31)
- Withdrawal of God's glory in 8-11 from the temple because of its desecration and its relocation with the people in exile
 - ◆ Threshold of temple: 9:3
 - ◆ Eastern gate: 10:4-5,18
 - ◆ Mount of Olives: 11:22-23
 - ◆ Babylon: 1:28; cf. 3:23; 8:4
- God's presence as a temporary sanctuary for his people in exile (11:14-16)
- God's vindication of his holiness in the judgment, salvation and renewal of his people (36:16-32; cf. 20:22-44; 29:25-29)
 - ◆ Judgment on Israel's impurity to prevent further profanation of his holy name by them (36:16-21)
 - ◆ Salvation and restoration of Israel to prevent profanation of his holy name by the nations (36:22-32)
 - Return to land (24)
 - Cleansing from impurity (25)
 - Transformation of hearts (26)
 - Empowerment by God's Spirit (27-28)
 - Restoration and blessing as the stimulus for repentance (29-32)
- Resurrection of Israel by God's Spirit (37:1-14)
 - ◆ Dead bones = Israel in exile
 - ◆ Breath = God's Spirit
- God's shepherding of Israel by a new David (34:11-24; cf. 37:22,24-25)
 - ◆ Flock of sheep and goats = Israel
 - ◆ Shepherds = kings and leaders
 - ◆ New shepherd = God with a second David
- God's new covenant of peace with adulterous Jerusalem (16:59-63; cf. 34:25-31; 37:26). Note the allegories of the foundling in 16 and of the two prostitutes in 23.
 - ◆ Jerusalem
 - Foundling girl exposed to die but saved by God
 - God's bride
 - Prostitute who sacrificed her own children to her lovers
 - Sister of Sodom and Samaria
 - ◆ God
 - Her saviour and surrogate parent
 - Her husband who divorces her and hands her over to her lovers to humiliate
 - Atonement for her and eternal covenant with her
- Promise of a new temple as God's eternal residence with his people (37:21-28; cf. 43:1-5; 48:35)

- ◆ Reunion of Israel under one king (21-22)
- ◆ Purification by God for life in the land under this king (23-25)
- ◆ Eternal covenant for the gift of God's sanctifying presence with his people (26-28)

6. Purpose

- To show why God allowed his temple to be destroyed
- To show how God would once again live with his purified people

4. The Scroll of the Twelve: the Minor Prophets

1. Location

- a. In the Hebrew Bible and English Bible they come after Ezekiel.
- b. In the LXX they come before Isaiah.

2. Main Theme: the Day of the Lord in Judgment and Deliverance

See: Joel 1:15, 2:1-2,11; 2:31; 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Ob 15; Zeph 1:7-2:3; Zech 12:1-14:21; Mal 4:1-6.

3. Arrangement into Four Groups

- a. Destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel as a type of God's judgment on Judah and the nations
 - Hosea: Northern Kingdom of Israel > Judah (750-725 BC)
 - Joel: Judah and Jerusalem > nations (740 or 610 or 510 BC?). Note the link of Joel 3:16 with Amos 1:2.
 - Amos: the Northern Kingdom > Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah (750-725 BC). Note the link of Amos 9:12 with Obadiah 19,21.
 - Obadiah: Edom > all nations (586 BC). Note the sequence in the LXX : Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah.
- b. Judah during the Assyrian period
 - Jonah: Assyria (c 750 BC or 400 BC)
 - Micah: Judah and Jerusalem (725-695 BC)
 - Nahum: Assyria for Judah (between 667 and 612 BC)
- c. Judah during the Babylonian period
 - Habakkuk: Babylon (605 BC)
 - Zephaniah: all wicked people - Judah, Philistia, Moab-Ammon, Ethiopia, Assyria (630-621 BC)
- d. Judah during the Persian period
 - Haggai: rebuilding of the temple (520 BC)
 - Zechariah: restoration of Jerusalem with its temple and deliverance from her enemies (520-500 BC)
 - Malachi: call to repentance for post-exilic Israel in view of the Lord's day (450-400 BC). Note the echo of Joel 2:31 in Mal 4:5.

a. Hosea

1. Setting

- Northern Kingdom: the reign of Jereboam 2 between 750–725 BC
- Time of economic prosperity and religious syncretism

2. Riddle of Hosea's Marriage in Hosea 1-3

- Hosea: God
- Gomer: the land of Israel
- Gomer's children: the people of Israel
- Their marriage: covenant at Sinai
- Adultery: worship of Baal and alliances with pagans
- Gomer's lovers: foreign gods and pagan-kings
- Wilderness: exile from the land
- Redemption: return from exile
- Betrothal and remarriage: new covenant

3. Structure

- a. Superscription (1:1)
- b. Message of Hosea's marriage (1:2 – 3:5)
- c. Unfaithful Israel and her faithful Lord (4-14)
 - Israel's unfaithfulness
 - ◆ God's charge against Israel (4:1-19)
 - ◆ God's judgment against Israel's leaders (5:1 – 6:3)
 - Israel's punishment
 - ◆ God's case against Israel (6:4 – 7:16)
 - ◆ God's judgment (8-10)
 - The Lord's faithful love
 - ◆ God's fatherly love (11:1-11)
 - ◆ Consequences of Israel's faithlessness (11:12 – 13:16)
 - ◆ Repentance and restoration (14)

4. Main Themes

- God's judgment on Israel's *adultery* in her worship and politics (4:9-14; 9:1-3)
- God's suffering love for his faithless people (11:1-9)
- God's demand for kindness and knowledge from Israel (4:1-3; 6:4-6)
- God's promise of a new covenant as a second marriage (2:16-23)
- God's promise of restoration and healing for repentant Israel (1:10; 3:5; 14:1-8)

5. Purpose

- To explain why God brought disaster on the northern Israelites (9:17; 13:9,16) and to call all Israel to repentance (14:1-3)
- To provide a model of God's dealing with his people in wrath and love (14:9)

b. Joel

1. Setting

- Locust plague in Judah about 740 BC or 610 BC or 500 BC

2. Structure

- a. Superscription (1:1)
- b. Introduction: call to teach the lesson of the locust plague (1:2-4)
- c. Locusts as prelude to day of God's judgment and deliverance (1:5 - 2:27)
 - Lament for the locust plague
 - ◆ Call to lament for the people and the priests (1:5-14)
 - ◆ Lament for the plague as a harbinger of the Lord's day (1:15-18)
 - ◆ Plea to the Lord for the land (1:19-20)
 - Cry of alarm for war and fasting
 - ◆ Alarm for invasion (2:1-11) with a call for repentance (2:12-14)
 - ◆ Alarm for a day of fasting and prayer (2:15-17) with the Lord's promise of deliverance from the plague (2:18-20)
 - Call for rejoicing at the Lord's promise of plenty (2:21-27)
- d. Future day of the Lord for the nations 2:28-3:27
 - God's gift of his Spirit to all people in the last times (2:28-29)
 - Salvation for repentant people of Zion on the Lord's day (2:30-32)
 - Judgment of the nations for their mistreatment of Israel (3:1-15)
 - Saving presence of God with his people in Zion (3:16-21)

3. Main Themes

- Grasshopper plague as the prelude to the future judgment of God's people and the final day of judgment for all people (2:10-11, 31)
- Need for repentance and prayer to the Lord to receive deliverance from judgment and renewed blessing (2:12-27, 32)
- Promise of God's Spirit to all his people in the last days (2:28-29)
- Judgment of nations for their mistreatment of Israel and fulfilment of God's promises about Zion on the Lord's day (3:1-3, 11-12)
- Promise of God's saving presence with his people in Zion and the restoration of paradise through her (3:16-18)

4. Purpose

Joel uses the events of the locust plague (1:2-3)

- To teach God's people to repent in the face of future judgment
- To encourage them to take refuge in the Lord by calling on him for deliverance from judgment
- To hope for the salvation of Zion and the restoration of paradise through God's presence in her

c. Amos

1. Setting

- Northern Israel during the reign of Jereboam II between 750-725 BC
- Towns of Bethel and Samaria with their wealthy citizens

2. Structure

- a. Superscription and introduction: the lion from Zion (1:1-2)
- b. God's wrath against his seven enemies (1:3 – 2:16)
- c. Oracles of judgment against Israel
 - God's judgment of the chosen people (3:1-15)
 - God's judgment on the unrepentant citizens of Samaria (4:1-13)
- d. Announcement of Israel's death
 - Dirge for Israel (5:1-3)
 - Call to seek God to escape death at the desecrated sanctuaries (5:4-15)
 - Woe for perverted worship (5:16-27) and for the complacency of Zion and Samaria (6:1-7)
 - God's decision to destroy Samaria (6:8-14)
- e. Five visions of Israel's end
 - Locust plague: averted by intercession (7:1-3)
 - Fire: averted by intercession (7:4-6)
 - The plumbline and the crooked wall (7:7-17)
 - Basket of rotten fruit (8:1-14)
 - Earthquake and the temple (9:1-10)
- f. Hope of restoration
 - Restoration of the Davidic monarchy (9:11-12)
 - Prosperity of the land (9:13-15)

3. Main Themes

- God's day of judgment on Israel for exploitation and injustice (5:10-13, 18-20; 8:4-8, 11-12; cf. 2:6-8; 3:9-11; 4:1-3; 6:1-7)
- Destruction of Israel by conquest and dispersion (9:7-10)
- God's requirement of justice and righteousness in Israel (5:21-24)
- Call to seek God in order to live (5:4-7, 14-15)
- Hope of future reunion and blessing (9:11-15)

4. Purpose

- To announce God's sentence of death upon Israel (5:1-2)
- To explain the reasons for it (3:1-2)

d. Obadiah

1. Setting

- Period after the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 597 BC or its sack by them in 587-6 BC, when the Edomites joined in the plunder of Jerusalem
- Or else: Invasion of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabs during the reign of Jehoram between 853-841 BC (see 2 Chr 21:8-20)

2. Structure

- a. Title and introduction (1)
- b. God's judgment on Edom
 - Announcement of Edom's destruction (2-7)
 - Reason for Edom's destruction (8-14)
- c. God's day of judgment on all nations
 - Judgment of the nations and deliverance of Zion (15-18)
 - Establishment of the Lord's kingdom (19-21)

3. Main Themes

- God's destruction of the Edomites for their pride and cruelty (1:3-4). Note the link of 19 and 21 with Amos 9:12.
- God's day of judgment for all the nations who attack Zion (1:15-16)
- Zion as a holy refuge on the day of the Lord (1:17)
- God's reign from Zion after judgment day (1:21)

4. Purpose

- To understand the judgment of Edom as a prelude to the judgment of all nations for their mistreatment of Zion
- To give hope to the people of Zion after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC

e. Jonah

1. Character

- Prophetic parable rather than a collection of sayings from a prophet
- Point made by God's concluding question in 4:11

2. Structure

- a. Deliverance of Jonah (1-2)
 - Jonah's disobedience (1:1-3)
 - God's judgment (1:4-16)
 - Jonah's rescue (1:17 – 2:10): note how the psalm of thanksgiving equates the fish with Sheol
- b. Deliverance of Nineveh (3-4)
 - Jonah's obedience (3:1-4)
 - Nineveh's repentance (3:5-9)
 - God's rebuke of Jonah (3:10-4:11)

3. Main Themes

- Purpose of God's judgments to lead people to repentance (1:2-4; 3:3-10)
- God's compassion as creator for all people and animals (1:9; 4:2,9-11)
- Prophetic mission of Israel to the nations: God's judgment of wickedness and deliverance of the penitent

4. Purpose

See 4:10-11.

- To show the universal scope of God's compassion which extends even to his enemies and to encourage his people to exercise the same compassion
- To introduce the prophecies of Micah and Nahum against Assyria

f. Micah

1. Setting

- a. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea, came from Moresheth, 40 km south-west of Jerusalem.
- b. He prophesied against Samaria and Jerusalem during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah from 742-687 BC (1:1).
- c. He announced the fall of Samaria in 1:6 (722-721 BC), the devastation of Judah by the Assyrians in 1:9-16 (701 BC), and the sack of Jerusalem in 3:12.
- d. Hezekiah's response to his prophecy of the temple's destruction was used to save Jeremiah's life (Jer 26:17-19).

2. Structure

- a. Superscription (1:1)
- b. God's case against Samaria and Jerusalem
 - Their sin and judgment: idolatry (1:2 – 2:11)
 - God's gathering of a remnant (2:12-13)
- c. God's judgment and deliverance of Zion
 - The greed of her leaders (3)
 - Her deliverance, restoration and purification (4-5)
- d. God's requirements and the hope of vindication by him
 - God's case against Israel (6)
 - Zion's lament about her people (7:1-10)
 - Vindication of Zion by God (7:11-20)

3. Main Themes

- God's judgment on the idolatry of Samaria and Jerusalem (1:2-7; cf. 5:10-15; 6:16) and on their leaders for their greedy exploitation of his people (2:1-2; 3:1-4, 8-12; cf. 6:9-16; 7:1-6)
- God's demand for justice, generosity and humility from his people (6:1-8)
- Deportation of Zion to Babylon and her rescue by God with his triumph over her enemies (4:6-13; cf. 2:12-13; 4:6-8; 5:7-9)
- Birth of a second David as king of Israel (5:2-4; cf. 2:12-13)

4. Purpose

See 7:7-10, 18-20.

- To encourage the people of Zion to hope for her vindication by God

g. Nahum

1. Setting

- About 625 BC
- Before the fall of the great Assyrian Empire in 612 BC

2. Structure

- Superscription: vision about Nineveh (1:1)
- God's appearance as Nineveh's judge (1:2-8)
- God's judgment of Assyria and the deliverance of Judah (1:9-15)
- Destruction of Nineveh for its violence and greed (2:1-3:19)

3. Main Themes

- God's justice in his punishment of the Assyrians and all his enemies for their wickedness (1:2-3, 9-11,14)
- God's passionate jealousy in saving his people from oppression (1:2,7-8, 12-13; cf. 2:2)

4. Purpose

See 1:15.

- To assure the oppressed people of Israel that God would free them from the oppression of the Assyrians and all other wicked people

h. Habakkuk

1. Setting

- About 605 BC after the Babylonians had defeated the Assyrians and then the Egyptians to become the superpower in the Middle East

2. Structure

a. Protest against the rule of violence: dialogue between God and the prophet

(1) The perversion of justice

- Habakkuk's complaint: God's toleration of injustice (1:2-4)
- God's reply: his use of Babylonians as agents of justice (1:5-11)

(2) God's use of the wicked to judge wickedness

- Habakkuk's complaint about God's use of Babylon (1:12-2:1)
- God's reply: revelation about the final destruction of the wicked and vindication of the righteous at the end of the world (2:2-5)

b. Taunt with five woes against Babylon (2:6-20)

c. Prayer for God's deliverance of his people and the defeat of his chaotic enemies (3:1-19)

3. Main Themes

- God's apparent inactivity in the face of injustice (1:2-4)
- God's use of wicked men to destroy wickedness (1:12-13)
- Eschatological vindication of the faithful with the destruction of the wicked by God (2:2-5; 3:2, 11-15) and the universal revelation of his glory (2:14)

4. Purpose

See 3:16-19.

- To encourage the righteous Israelites to wait faithfully for God's judgment of their enemies and to rejoice in him as their coming deliverer

i. Zephaniah

1. Author and Setting

- Great grandson of Hezekiah (1:1)
- Reign of Josiah before the Deuteronomic Reformation in 621 BC

2. Structure

- a. Superscription (1:1)
- b. Day of the Lord as judgment for the wicked
 - God's universal judgment on the wicked (1:2-3)
 - God's judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (1:4-13)
 - Call for Israel to seek the Lord to escape his wrath (1:14-2:3)
 - Oracles of judgment against Judah's enemies (2:4-15)
 - God's woe on Jerusalem for her refusal to accept his correction (3:1-7)
- c. Day of the Lord as deliverance for the righteous
 - God's purification of the nations for divine service (3:8-10)
 - God's removal of the proud from Zion (3:11-13)
 - Praise for God's presence in Zion (3:14-17)
 - Promise of Judah's restoration and glorification by God (3:18-20)

3. Main Themes

- God's judgment of the whole world and all nations (1:2-3; cf. 1:14-18; 3:8)
- God's judgment on Jerusalem for her idolatry (1:4-6) and refusal to accept correction (3:1-7)
- Call for God's people to seek the Lord to escape his wrath (2:1-3)
- Survival of a humble remnant in Zion on the Lord's day (3:11-13; cf. 2:7,9b)
- God's judgment of the Gentiles to purify them for divine service (2:10-11; 3:8-9)
- Zion's rejoicing at the Lord's presence with her and his rejoicing over her (3:14-17; cf. 3:19)

4. Purpose

- To announce God's day of judgment on Judah and all the nations before the restoration of a humble remnant in Zion

j. Haggai

1. Setting

- See the story of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah in Ezra 5:1-2
- Resumption of the temple's reconstruction in 520 BC after the people who had returned from exile in 536 BC had stopped work on it
- Completion of the second temple with its dedication in 515 BC (Ezra 6:13-18)

2. Structure

- God's command to rebuild his temple (1:1-11)
- Resumption of work on the temple (1:12-15)
- Promise of the future splendour of the temple (2:1-9)
- Need for pure worship to receive God's blessings (2:10-19)
- God's promise to David's descendant Zerubbabel as the temple builder (2:20-23)

3. Main Themes

- Temple as the place for God's appearance in his glory (1:8)
- God's blessing of his people through his presence in the temple (2:19)
- Dawn of a new age of peace after God's upheaval of the world and the nations (2:6-9; cf. 2:20-22)

4. Purpose

- To encourage the rebuilding of the temple, so that God could bless his people by his presence with them

k. Zechariah

1. Setting

- Period after 520 BC when Zechariah and Haggai encouraged the resumption of work on the temple (Ezra 5:1-2) until it was dedicated in 515 BC (Ezra 6:13-18)

2. Structure

- a. Proto-Zechariah: God's promises of Zion's restoration (1-8)
 - Call to repent (1:1-6)
 - Eight visions about the restoration of Zion (1:7-6:8)
 - Coronation of Joshua the high priest as a sign of the future royal priest (6:9-15)
 - Times for fasting and celebration in Zion (7-8)
- b. Deutero-Zechariah: Zion's ultimate destiny (9-14)
 - (1) Oracle about God's concern for his flock and its shepherds (9-11)
 - God's possession of the nations (9:1-8)
 - Zion's future king and the liberation of her people (9:9-17)
 - The good shepherd and the worthless shepherds (10:1-11:17)
 - (2) Apocalyptic oracle about Zion (12-14)
 - God's protection of Zion from her enemies (12:1-9)
 - Purification of Zion (12:10-13:9)
 - God's rule of the nations from Zion (14:1-12)

3. Main Themes

- Need to heed the call to repentance given by the pre-exilic prophets (1:2-6)
- God's promise to return to Zion and dwell in the rebuilt temple (1:14-17; 2:10-12; cf. 8:1-8)
- God's promise to gather his people (10:6-12) and protect them (2:5, 8-9; cf. 9:16)
- Promise of a humble king to purify Zion (3:6-10) and to establish God's peaceful rule over the earth (9:8-10; 12:10-13:1)
- Inclusion of the gentiles in the Lord's worship at Zion (8:20-23; 14:16-19; cf. 2:11)
- Eschatological kingship of the Lord (14:9; cf. 14:16)

4. Purpose

- To show how the post-exilic restoration of Zion with its temple would eventually lead to the triumph of God's rule over the whole earth

I. Malachi

1. Name and Setting

- Malachi = My Messenger (3:1)
- Between 450 –300 BC in the post-exilic period when the people who had returned from exile were discouraged, because God had not fulfilled his promises to them

2. Structure

- a. Six disputations between God and his people (1:2 – 4:3)
 - God's love for Israel (1:2-5). See 1:2.
 - Profaning God's name (1:6 – 2:9). See 1:6-7.
 - Faithfulness to God (2:10-16). See 2:10.
 - God's justice (2:17 – 3:5). See 2:17.
 - Sacrificial repentance (3:6-12). See 3:7-8.
 - Prosperity of evildoers (3:13 – 4:3). See 3:13-15.
- b. Closing admonition and promise (4:4-6)

3. Main Themes

- Pure worship of God and its blessings (1:11; 3:3-4, 10-12)
- Promise of a messenger to prepare for the Lord's coming (3:1^a; cf. 4:5-6)

4. Purpose

See 4:4-5.

- To encourage the demoralised Jews in the post-exilic period to remain faithful to God and his law as they waited for the day of the Lord
- Note how these verses provide the link with the New Testament and the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt 11:14; 17:11; Mark 9:12; Luke 1:17).

F. THE WRITINGS

1. The third group of books in the Hebrew Bible is called the *Kethubim*, ie. the Writings.
2. This third category of books may have been influenced by the notion of inspired wisdom as in Jeremiah 18:18.
3. The canonical status of these books was settled by the rabbis round about 90 AD with considerable dispute about Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, as well as the other books from the Septuagint that are now found in the Apocrypha.
4. It contains those books that were not set down for continuous reading in regular worship at the synagogue, even though the Psalms and Festive scrolls were used on particular occasions.
5. The order of these books varies.
 - a. The Palestinian tradition places Chronicles first, even though Jesus in Luke 24:44 indicates the priority of Psalms.
 - b. Job is sometimes placed before Proverbs.
 - c. Daniel seems to have been shifted to the **Writings** after the destruction of the second temple as a result of a rebellion inspired by speculations on Daniel 9:24-26. It was therefore not regarded as a book of prophecy by the rabbis, but was used as a textbook on apocalyptic wisdom and piety.
6. The basic principle for this category is the connection of wisdom and poetry with worship and piety as summarised in the motto: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
7. The wisdom books, from Proverbs to Daniel, are framed by Psalms and Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles to show that wisdom comes from involvement in the divine service.

1. Psalms

The Praises of God

1. Names

- a. Hebrew: *The Praises*
- b. Greek: *Psalms* = songs sung with stringed accompaniment

2. **Basic Structure:** five books like the Torah as shown by the eulogies in 41:13; 72:18-20; 89:52; and 106:48 that culminate in the universal call to praise in 150.

- **Book 1:** Psalms 1-41
- **Book 2:** Psalms 42-72
- **Book 3:** Psalms 73-89
- **Book 4:** Psalms 90-106
- **Book 5:** Psalms 107-150

3. Six Main Types of Psalms

- a. *Individual laments* (complaints) that seek God's help in trouble.
See Psalm 13; cf. 1 Sam 1:9-11.
 - Address of God in trouble (13:1,3)
 - Description and complaint about trouble (13:1-2)
 - Petition to God for help (13:3-4)
 - Confession of faith in God's grace and help (13:5)
 - Promise of praise or act of praise for anticipated help (13:6)
- b. *Individual thanksgivings* for help received from God in trouble.
See Psalm 30; cf. Job 33:19-22, 26-28; Jer 33:10-11.
 - Act of thanksgiving with presentation of thank offering
 - ◆ Thanksgiving for deliverance (30:1-3)
 - ◆ Call for congregation to join in praising God for his goodness (30:4-5)
 - Account of deliverance
 - ◆ Description of trouble (30:6-7)
 - ◆ Cry for deliverance (30:8-10; cf. 2)
 - ◆ Act of deliverance (30:11; cf. 1-3)
 - Vow of praise (30:12)
- c. *Individual confessions of trust* in God
See Psalm 23.
- d. *National laments* (complaints) that implore God's help on national days of fasting in times of disaster, such as famine, plague and defeat in battle.
See Psalm 79; cf. 2 Chron 20:1-17.

- e. *National thanksgivings* for God's help to Israel
See Ps 118; cf. 2 Chron 20:24-28; 33:10-16.
- f. *National hymns of praise* for God's kindness in creation and redemption that were sung during the service for the daily burnt offering by the temple choir to announce God's presence there.
See Ps 100; cf. 1 Chron 23:30-31; 29:25-30.

4. Purpose

It is the *hymn book* of the Second Temple which teaches God's people

- To meditate on God's teaching as a guide to a fruitful life (Ps 1)
- To hope for God's Messiah and take refuge in him (Ps 2)
- To praise him in worship and daily life (Ps 145 - 150)

2. Proverbs

The Getting of Wisdom

1. Basic Genres

- a. Proverb: Proverbs 27:17
*As iron sharpens on iron,
so a person sharpens the face of his friend/neighbour.*
- b. Instruction: Proverbs 16:3; cf. 3:1-12
*Commit (lit. roll) your work to the Lord,
so that your plans may be established.*
- c. Riddle: Proverbs 17:16
*Why is there this payment in the hand of a fool
to buy/get wisdom, when he has no heart/mind.*

2. Structure

- a. Prologue on Woman Wisdom and the getting of wisdom: 1-9.
- b. Body: the Seven Books of Wisdom
 - The proverbs of Solomon: 10:1 - 22:16
 - The words of the wise: 22:17 - 24:22
 - Sayings of the wise: 24:23-34
 - Hezekiah's collection of proverbs: 25-29
 - The words of Agur: 30:1-33
 - The words of Lemuel from his mother: 31:1-9
 - Acrostic poem on the good wife as the teacher of wisdom: 31:10-31

3. Main Themes

- God's use of wisdom in ordering and maintaining his creation and life in it (Prov 3:13-20; cf. 8:12-31)
- Destructiveness of folly in defying this order (Prov 1:20-33)
- Wisdom as the product of the fear of the Lord: respect for God and trust in his management of life (Prov 9:10; 3:3-8; cf. 1:7; 15:33)
- Learning from instruction and experience in the school of life (Prov 19:12; cf. 3:11-12; 4:10-19)
- Getting wisdom by living wisely with God and with people (Prov 2:1-22)
 - ◆ Reception of wisdom by meditation and prayer (1-4)
 - ◆ Consequent reverence for God and intimacy with him (5)
 - ◆ God's speaking as the source of life saving wisdom (6-8)
 - ◆ Consequent sharpened conscience (9)
 - ◆ Gift of wisdom as a protective power (10-11)

- ◆ Consequent deliverance from evildoers (12-15) and Ms Folly (16-19) for communal life in the land (20-22)
- Patronage of Woman Wisdom and reception of her gifts to her students (Prov 4:1-9)
 - ◆ Vitality (4)
 - ◆ Protection from evil and disaster (6)
 - ◆ Promotion to a position of honour and power (8-9)
- Woman Wisdom as the mediator between the Lord and humanity (Prov 8:32 - 9:6)
 - ◆ Mediation of divine favour and vitality
 - ◆ The banquet of wisdom with the gift of intimacy with God and insight into him
- Ms Folly as the negative counterpart to Woman Wisdom (Prov 9:13-18; note the sequence of gradual unmasking in 2:16-19; 5:1-14; 6:23-35; 7:1-27; 9:13-18)

4. Purpose

Proverbs was used as the textbook in the wisdom schools

- To teach reading and writing and thinking
- To teach young men how to get wisdom by leading a God-fearing life

3. Job

Learning Wisdom in the School of Suffering

1. Structure

- a. Prologue: the test of Job's integrity (1-2)
See Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6.
- b. Job and his comforters
 - (1) Job's curse of his birthday (3)
 - (2) Three rounds of speeches between Job and his three friends
 - First round (4-14)
 - Second round (15-21)
 - Third incomplete round (22-26)
 - (3) Job's oath of innocence and curse of his enemy (27)
See 27:1-10.
- c. Poem on the hidden wisdom of God (28)
- d. Job and God
 - (1) Job's complaint and oath of clearance (29-31)
See 29:1-5,11-17; 31:5-8.
 - (2) Elihu's attempt at arbitration (32-37)
 - (3) God's appearance to answer Job's charges of incompetence and injustice
 - God's challenge for Job to prove his wisdom (38:1-40:2)
See 38:1-11.
 - Job's withdrawal of charges against God (40:3-5)
 - God's challenge for Job to prove his justice (40:6-41:34)
See 40:6-14.
 - Job's retraction of charges against God (42:1-6)
- e. Epilogue: the intercession of Job and his restoration (42:7-17)
See 42:7-10.

2. Job's Problem

- a. An Israelite who was the victim of injustice could always appeal to God against his enemies with an *individual complaint*.

God as defendant and judge

appeal

justice

Person

Enemy

injustice

- b. Job's problem was that, since God was his apparent *enemy*, he could not appeal to God to prove his innocence.
- c. While the book of Job has been influenced by the structure of individual complaints, it also differs from them at certain decisive points, since God himself is Job's *enemy*.
- d. Job's solution in two-fold
 - (1) He appeals to his friends to act as his advocates with God, but they become his *enemies*.
 - (2) When they fail him, he challenges God to act with an *oath of innocence* (Job 27:1-6) and an *oath of clearance* (Job 31).
- e. God must reveal Job's innocence or guilt, by either punishing him or restoring his prosperity. This, however, puts God in a difficult dilemma as it assumes that either Job, or God, is guilty. Hence, if God fails to punish Job, he, in fact, admits his guilt in the matter.
- f. By his appearance, God vindicates both himself and Job.

3. Main Themes

- Innocent suffering as the test and vindication of spiritual integrity (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; 42:7)
- Job's demand for justice from God in the face of his apparent hostility (Job 7:12-21; 13:13-23)
- Job's despair at God's apparent mismanagement of the world (Job 9:2-3,13-24; 16:6-14)
- Job's sensitisation to human injustice and misery through suffering (Job 24:1-17)
- True friendship as solidarity in suffering (Job 2:11-13; 6:14-29; 19:14-22)
- Need for a mediator between God and humanity (Job 9:33-35; 16:18-21; 19:23-27)
- God's hidden wisdom in administering the world and dealing with evil (Job 28:12-15,20-28; cf. chapters 38-41)

4. Purpose

The book of Job is a book of wisdom

- To help a righteous person cope with innocent suffering
- To show how God uses suffering to turn a righteous person, who had been an agent of divine justice (Job 27:7-17), into an intercessor and agent of divine grace to others (Job 42:7-9).

4. The Festive Scrolls (*Megilloth*)

a. The Song of Solomon

1. Names

- Hebrew: *the Song of Songs*, which means *the Best Song*.
- English: *the Song of Solomon*, which indicates that it is a wisdom text, or *the Canticles*, which comes from the Latin Bible.

2. Structure

The book is a chain of loosely arranged love poems in the form of a dialogue between a *Lover*, a woman called the Shulamite (6:13) and her *Beloved*, called the king Solomon (3:11), that is occasionally interrupted by her interaction with a chorus of women called the daughters of Jerusalem (1:4b-6,11-14; 2:3-7; 3:1-11; 5:1^b-6:3, 11-13^a; 8:3--5^a,8-9). The repetition of the adjuration to the daughters of Jerusalem in 2:7; 3:5; 5:8; and 8:4 divides the book into four cycles of poems

- Introduction on speaking as kissing: 1:1-4
- First cycle: 1:5 - 2:7
- Second cycle: 2:8 - 3:5
- Third cycle: 3:6 - 5:8
- Fourth cycle: 5:9 - 8:4
- Conclusion on the power of love: 8:5 - 8:12
- Conversation between Woman Wisdom and her student: 8:13-14

3. Main Themes

- A woman's delight in her beloved and his response to her words of love for him (2:3-7)
- Sexual love as a dialogue between a woman and a man which recaptures something of what was lost in Eden (4:10-15)

4. Liturgical Use

- Set for reading at the Feast of Passover in mid-Spring, the season of the poem (2:11-13^a)

5. Purpose

- To celebrate the love of a woman and a man for each other as expressed in their verbal intimacy and delight (8:6-7)
- To put the potential students of wisdom in the shoes of *Solomon* and get them to listen for the voice of Wisdom speaking through their beloved (8:13-14)
- To articulate Israel's delight in her divine royal lover who rescued her from Egypt and ennobled her by his love

Festive Scrolls

b. Ruth

1. Structure

- Naomi's return from Moab as a childless widow with Ruth (1:1-22)
- Discovery of Ruth by her kinsman Boaz (2:1-23)
- Ruth's visit to Boaz to sleep with him (3:1-18)
- Redemption of Naomi's family by the marriage of Boaz to Ruth and his provision of a grandson for Naomi (4:1-22)

2. Main Themes

- a. Loyalty of Ruth to Naomi's family and the Lord (1:16-17; cf. 2:11-12)
- b. Faithfulness of Boaz in fulfilling his duties as the *goel* of Naomi (4:1-10,14; cf. 2:20; 3:9,12-13)
 - Hebrew *goel* as the closest adult male relative on the father's side of the family
 - Duty of the kinsman/redeemer to preserve the livelihood and continuation of the family on its tract of land
 - ◆ By ransoming a family member from debt, slavery, or captivity
 - ◆ By buying the family estate to prevent it from leaving the family
 - ◆ By defending a relative against injustice in the local court of law
 - ◆ By avenging the death of a relative
 - ◆ By providing an heir for a brother, or close relative, who died without a male to carry on the family name and retain the property of the family
 - ◆ By preventing a relative from losing social status and identity
- c. God's kindness in preserving the family of Naomi, despite drought and death, and in blessing it with descendants, so that it eventually became the royal family of David (4:11-14; cf. 1:6; 2:20; 3:10; 4:5)

3. Liturgical Use

- Set for reading at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) which commemorates the conclusion of the barley harvest

4. Purpose

- To show how God cares for a faithful family in trouble and uses it to care for his people by raising up the dynasty of David from it
- To show how God provides for his people in the Promised Land

Festive Scrolls

c. Lamentations

1. Origin

- Composition for national days of fasting (Zech 7:2-5; 8:19) to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BC (2 Kgs 25:8-10; Jer 52:12-14)
- Ascription to Jeremiah in the LXX

2. Structure

- Acrostic funeral song for Zion with a lament by Zion in 1:9^b-16 and 18-22: 1:1-22
- Acrostic funeral song for Zion: 2:1-22
- Acrostic individual lament by Zion: 3:1-66
- Acrostic funeral song for Zion: 4:1-22
- National lament for the destruction of Zion: 5:1-22

3. Main Themes

- Bereavement of mother Zion and exile of her children (Lam 1:1-3, cf. 2:6-9)
- Zion's sins as the reason for God's judgment on her and her citizens (Lam 1:8,17-20; cf. 3:40-42)
- Zion's reliance on God's mercy and compassion (Lam 3:22-26, 32-33)
- Zion's plea for God's judgment of her enemies and her vindication by God (Lam 1:21-22; 5:19-22; cf. 3:55-66)

4. Liturgical Use

- Set for reading at the fast of the 9th of Ab in late July or early August to commemorate the destruction of the first temple in 587 BC as well as the second temple in 70 AD.

5. Purpose

- To lament the destruction of Jerusalem
- To plead with God for its restoration

Festive Scrolls

d. Ecclesiastes

1. Structure

- a. Introduction: 1:1-11
 - Title (1:1)
 - Motto and the problem of gain from work (1:2-3)
 - Poem on the human lot (1:4-11)

- b. Investigations of Ecclesiastes: 1:12 – 11:6
 - (1) Double introduction: profit from work and wisdom (1:12-18)
 - (2) Profit from work
 - Futility of searching for pleasure (2:1-11)
 - Uncertain legacy of the wise man (2:12-17)
 - Gain from work (2:18-26)
 - Threat of injustice (3:1 – 4:6)
 - Work to make provision for others (4:7-16)
 - Work for the accumulation of possessions (5:1-6:9)
 - (3) Profit from wisdom.
 - Ignorance of the future benefits (6:10-8:17)
 - Threat of death and human ingratitude (9:1-16)
 - Threat of folly for wisest person (9:17–10:20)
 - Limits of human knowledge (11:1-6)

- c. Conclusion: 11:7-12:14
 - Poem: call for continual enjoyment (11:7-12:7)
 - Motto about the vanity of work (12:8)
 - Editorial epilogue (12:9-14)

2. Basic Question

What is the profit from human work on earth? See 1:3; cf. 2:22; 3:9.

3. Cultural Context of Ecclesiastes

- Original goal of wisdom as adjustment to the God-given natural and social order for the enjoyment of his blessings
- Development of rational technology for the manipulation of the natural world for personal gain apart from God
- Belief in human control of the world and in people's creation of their own happiness
- Criticism by Ecclesiastes of this technological approach to life with its focus on human performance and achievement, rather than on the fear of the Lord

4. Main Themes

- a. Hidden order for human life on earth: 1:4-11; cf. 8:16-17
 - Humans as transient residents on God's earth
 - Government by force that create the dynamic order necessary for human life
 - Human ignorance of this order and inability to change it
 - Transitory nature of human accomplishments
- b. Futility of human toil
See 1:2 and 12:8 with the concept of **vanity** as breath or vapour.
 - (1) Human inability to create happiness
 - Elusiveness of happiness
 - Emptiness of hedonism with its pursuit of pleasure
 - Anxiety from wealth
 - Loss of capacity for enjoyment
 - 2) Threats to human achievements
 - Injustice and evil
 - Unpredictability of death
 - Unreliability of heirs
 - Human forgetfulness
 - 3) Human limitations in undertaking any project
 - Ignorance of future events
 - Ignorance of what is ultimately beneficial or detrimental
 - Ignorance of God's total management of the world
- c. Enjoyment as a gift from God
See the **seven** counsels of enjoyment.
 - Wisdom as enjoyment in work and leisure (2:24-26)
 - God's gift of enjoyment in all the seasons of life (3:1-14)
 - Work as a God-given means of enjoyment (3:22)
 - God-given capacity for delight in work, for the acceptance of one's lot, and for the enjoyment of work (5:18-20)
 - Life as a continual festival from God (8:15)
 - Summons to divinely approved enjoyment (9:7-10)
 - Duty of life-long enjoyment (11:7 – 12:7)

5. Liturgical Use

- Set for reading at the Feast of Tabernacles in late September or early October, time for great rejoicing at the end of the agricultural year

6. Purpose

- To investigate the profit from mental and physical work on earth
- To encourage God's people to rejoice in their lot and to regard joy as his best gift for them in this life

The Festive Scrolls

e. Esther

1. Structure

- Ahasu-erub the Persian king and the disobedience of Queen Vashti: 1:1-22
- Choice of Esther, the niece of Mordecai, as his queen: 2:1-23
- Plot of Haman for the extermination of the Jews in Persia: 3:1-5:14
- Death of Haman and salvation of the Jews through the intercession of Esther: 6:1-9:19
- Commemoration of the event by the Feast of Purim: 9:20-32
- Promotion of Mordecai as the deputy of the king: 10:1-3

2. Main Themes

- Threat of pogrom for the Jews from their enemies in Persia (3:7-11,13)
- Concern of Esther for her people (4:15-16; 8:3-6)
- Triumph of the Jews over their enemies (9:15-17; 10:3)

3. Liturgical Use

- Set for reading at the Feast of Purim in late February or early March

4. Purpose

- To show how the Jews triumphed over their enemies (6:12-13)
- To explain the origin of the Feast of Purim (9:20-22, 26-28)

5. Daniel

God's Rule and the End of Human History

1. Structure

Note that the text of 2:4b-7:28 is in Aramaic, the common language of the Persian empire and that while 1-6 are stories about Daniel and his friends in the Babylonian court, 7-12 contain the visions of Daniel and their interpretation by angels.

- a. Prologue: Daniel in the Babylonian court (1:1-21)
- b. The Most High God as the Lord of the nations (2:1-7:28)
 - Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the four kingdoms and God's kingdom [2:1-49]
 - ◆ Nebuchadnezzar's self-glorification with his idol and God's rescue of his servants from the furnace [3:1-30]
 - God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar for his pride [4:1-37]
 - God's judgment on Belshazzar for his desecration of the temple vessels [5:1-31]
 - ◆ Self-glorification of Darius by prayer to him and Daniel's rescue from the lion's den [6:1-28]
 - Daniel's vision of the four kingdoms before the coming of the Son of Man and his establishment of God's kingdom [7:1-28]
- c. Daniel's vision of ram and a goat and their identification by the angel as the Persians and the Greeks (8:1-27)
- d. Daniel's prayer about the seventy 'weeks' of exile and their interpretation by an angel in a vision (9:1-27)
- e. Daniel's vision of the heavenly messenger and his revelation about the end of human history (10:1 - 12:13)

2. Main Themes

- God's kingly wisdom and power that raises up and overrules even the greatest pagan kings (2:20-23; 4:34-37; cf. 6:26-27)
- God's gift of his wisdom to his faithful people to understand his purpose for the nations and them (1:17; 2:27-30, 47; cf. 4:8-9; 5:11-12; 9:22-24; 11:33-35; 12:10)
- God's judgment on the pagan kings for their acts of sacrilege and self-deification (4:31-33; 5:18-28; cf. 8:23-25; 11:36-39)
- Ongoing exile of God's people and their oppression by earthly and heavenly powers until their deliverance at the final judgment and resurrection of the dead (9:16-24; 11:31; 12:1-3)
- God's eventual destruction of every human kingdom and the gift of his kingdom to the son of man and the saints (7:13-14; 18, 21-22, 26-27; cf. 2:44-45; 4:3)

3. Purpose

- To encourage God's people to remain faithful to God in the face of pagan persecution (3:16-18; 6:20-22)
- To wait for their final deliverance by God (12:1-4, 12)

6. Ezra and Nehemiah

Post-exilic Israel as a Liturgical Community

1. Origin and Connection

- Link by continuous narrative about the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem
- Decree of Cyrus that overlaps Ezra 1:1-4 and 2 Chronicles 36:22-23
- History in Ezra 1-6 from the return of exiles under Shesh-bazzar in 538 BC to the dedication of the temple in 515 BC.
- Story of Ezra, the priest/scribe, from his appointment as a Persian commissioner for Jewish worship in Jerusalem to the promulgation of the Pentateuch as Judah's religious constitution about 428 BC. in Ezra 7-10 and in Nehemiah 8-10
- Memoirs of Nehemiah, the Persian governor of Judah, who rebuilt of the city at about 445 BC in Nehemiah 1-7 and 11-13
- Common theme: organisation of Israel as a liturgical community, centred on the temple in Jerusalem and the law of Moses, rather than a political community, centred on the land and a king

2. Structure

- a. Decree of the Cyrus for the rebuilding of the Lord's house: Ezra 1:1-4
Note that the *house* refers to the temple, the community, and the city.
- b. Rebuilding the Lord's house: Ezra 1:5-Neh 7:3.
 - First stage (Ezra 1:5 - 6:22): building the *temple*
 - ◆ Return of exiles under Sheshbazzar (1:5-2:70)
 - ◆ Restoration of the divine service (3:1-7)
 - ◆ Rebuilding the temple and celebration of Passover (3:8-6:22)
 - Second stage (Ezra 7:1-10:44): building the *community*
 - ◆ Return of exiles under Ezra (7:1-8:36)
 - ◆ Problem of mixed marriages (9:1-10:44)
 - Third stage (Neh 1:1 - 7:3): building the *city*
 - ◆ Commission of Nehemiah as governor and his return (1:1-2:10)
 - ◆ Reconstruction of the city walls despite opposition (2:11-7:3)
- c. Consolidation of community as the Lord's household: Neh 7:4 - 13:31
 - Membership of congregation (7:4-73; cf. Ezra 2).
 - Promulgation of Pentateuch as its constitution.
 - ◆ First reading of law: celebration of the New Year (8:1-12).

- ◆ Second reading of law: celebration of Tabernacles (8:13-18)
- ◆ Third reading of law: day of fasting and prayer (9:1-37)
- ◆ Pledge of community to support the temple (9:38-10:40)
- Repopulation of holy city (11:1-12:26)
- Dedication of city with its walls (12:27-43)
- Organisation of liturgical community (12:44-13:31)

3. Main Themes

- Return of some people from exile to re-establish the divine service and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 3:1-5; 6:16-22)
- Support of Persian kings for temple at Jerusalem as a place of intercession for them (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:6-12; cf. Ezra 6:1-5,14,22; 7:1-26; Neh 2:1-8)
- Promulgation of Pentateuch as constitution for Israel as a liturgical community (Neh 8:1-8, 10:28-31; cf. Ezra 3:2; 6:18; 7:6,10,14,25-26; Neh 8:13-18; 9:1-3; 13:1-3)
- Congregational involvement in restoration of Jerusalem and in responsibility for the divine service (Ezra 1:5-6; 2:68-69; Neh 10:32-39; cf. Ezra 2:1; 3:1; 6:16; 7:7; 8:1,35-36; 10:2-17; Neh 2:16-18; 4:6; 7:70-72; 11:1-2; 13:1-3)

4. Purpose

- To show how a holy remnant of those in exile fulfilled the Lord's command to restore the temple and its services
- To demonstrate the theological basis of post-exilic Judaism as a liturgical community in the Persian Empire

7. 1-2 Chronicles

Foundation of the Temple and Divine Service at Jerusalem

1. Structure

- a. Roll of Israel: 1 Chron 1:1-9:34
 - Ancestors of Israel (1 Chron 1:1-53)
 - Genealogy of all Israel (1 Chron 2:1-9:1)
 - Inhabitants of post-exilic Jerusalem (1 Chron 9:2-34)
- b. Establishment of Israel as a liturgical community: 1 Chron 9:35-2 Chron 9:31
 - David as founder of temple worship (1 Chron 9:35 - 29:20)
 - Solomon as builder of the temple (2 Chron 1-9)
- c. Assessment of the Judean kings as temple patrons: 2 Chron 10-35
 - Rehoboam (2 Chron 10-12): penitent evildoer
 - Abijah (2 Chron 13): godly king
 - Asa (2 Chron 14-16): reformer
 - Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 17-20): godly king
 - Jehoram (2 Chron 21): idolatrous king like Ahab
 - Ahaziah with revolt of Queen Athaliah (2 Chron 22-23): idolatrous king
 - Joash (2 Chron 24): first godly and then worshipper of Asherah
 - Amaziah (2 Chron 25): mixed legacy
 - Uzziah and Jotham (2 Chron 26-27): godly kings
 - Ahaz (2 Chron 28): apostate king who shut up the temple
 - Hezekiah (2 Chron 29-32): great reformer and second Solomon
 - Manasseh and Amon (2 Chron 33): apostate kings
 - Josiah (2 Chron 34-35): great reformer
- d. Destruction of polluted temple by the Babylonians: 2 Chron 36:1-21
- e. Lord's command to rebuild the temple: 2 Chron 36:22-23 (= Ezra 1:1-3)

2. Main Themes

- a. Divine service at the temple
 - God's choice of Jerusalem as for the temple and its services (1 Chron 21:18-19,26-22:1; cf. 2 Chron 3:1; 36:22-23)
 - Access to God's presence through the daily burnt offering at the temple (2 Chron 7:12-16; cf. 13:4-12)
 - David's institution of choral music for the proclamation of God's presence during the public burnt offering (1 Chron

23:30-31; 2 Chron 5:11-14; 29:25-30; cf. 1 Chron 6:31-48; 16:4-42; 25:1-31; 2 Chron 7:1-6; 8:14; 23:18; 31:2; 35:15)

- Responsibility of the priests for the sacrificial ritual (1 Chron 6:49; 23:13) with the Levites as their assistants (1 Chron 23:2-5; 24-32).
- Role of the prophets in calling the kings back to the right worship of God (2 Chron 24:17-20; cf. 36:15-16)
- Israel's prosperity from orthodoxy in worship according to the law of Moses (1 Chron 22:11-13; 28:8; cf. 2 Chron 7:19-22; 29:6-9; 33:8)
- Unity of Israel from common worship at the temple (2 Chron 11:13-16; cf. 2 Chron 15:9-15; 19:4; 30:1-10; 31:1; 34:6-7; 35:17-18)
- Temple's destruction because of its pollution (2 Chron 36:14; cf. 28:22-24; 33:4-8)

b. Liturgical role of kingship in Israel

- Confirmation of God's perpetual covenant with David and his successors by Solomon's obedience in building the temple and implementing the divinely instituted service (1 Chron 28:6-7; 2 Chron 21;7; cf. 1 Chron 17:11-14; 2 Chron 7:17-18; 13:5)
- Status of Solomon and his successors as God's adopted son (1 Chron 22:10; cf. 1 Chron 17:3; 28:6)
- God's delegation of his kingship over Israel to Solomon and his successors (1 Chron 28:5; 2 Chron 13:8; cf. 1 Chron 17:4; 29:23; 2 Chron 9:8)
- Royal responsibility for
 - ◆ Endowment of the public sacrifices (2 Chron 8:12-14; 31:3)
 - ◆ Organisation of the priesthood (2 Chron 31:3).
 - ◆ Maintenance of the temple (2 Chron 34:8-13; cf. 24:4-14)
 - ◆ Abolition of idolatrous worship (2 Chron 15:8)
 - ◆ Reformation of unorthodox worship (2 Chron 29)
- David's performance of the Lord's song on behalf of Israel and the nations through the Levitical choir (1 Chron 16:7-9; 2 Chron 7:6)

3. Purpose

- To legitimise the musical performance of praise as part of the divine service at the Second Temple in the post-exilic period
- To show how the prosperity of Israel depended on the orthodoxy of her worship according to the law of Moses
- To define the nature and identity of Israel as a liturgical community instituted by the Lord through Moses and established by David and Solomon

F. NEW TESTAMENT

1. Nature and Structure of the New Testament

1. As the Old Testament is prophetic, so the New Testament is apostolic in its origin and nature.
2. An apostle (*apostolos*= sent person) was a person authorised and commissioned by the risen Lord to be his agent and witness.
 - a. See Mark 3:13-14; cf. Matt 10:1-5; Luke 9:1-6
 - Call by Jesus
 - Appointment by him to be with him
 - Commission (sending) to work with him by preaching and casting out demons
 - b. See Acts 1:15-26; cf. Paul in 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1; 15:1-11.
 - Companion of Jesus in his earthly ministry
 - Eye witness to the risen Lord: inspiration by Holy Spirit (John 14:26)
3. What was the unique function of the apostles?
 - Eye witnesses of the risen Lord (John 15:26-27, Acts 1:8; cf. 1 John 1:1-3)
 - Founders of the church on the Lord Jesus (Matt 16:15-18, Eph 2:19-20)
 - Agents of unity in the church through faith in their word (John 17:20-21)
4. The structure of the New Testament
 - a. The apostolic gospels
 - The synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke
 - St John
 - b. Apostolic history: the Acts of the Apostles
 - c. The apostolic epistles (letters)
 - Pauline epistles
 - ◆ Ecclesiastical: Romans–2 Thessalonians (letters to church)
 - ◆ Pastoral: 1 Timothy–Philemon (letters to pastor)
 - Catholic epistles: Hebrew–Jude (letters to a group of churches)
 - d. Apostolic prophecy: Revelation (The Apocalypse of St John)
5. Apostolic origin of the New Testament

- a. Some books come from one of the twelve apostles (eg. Matthew, John, Peter).
- b. Some come from other apostles like Paul, or James and Jude, the brothers of Jesus.
- c. The gospel of Mark stems from Peter.
- d. Luke summarises the message of the apostles (Luke 1:1-4) and tells the story of their witness to the risen Lord (Acts 1:1-8).
- e. Although the authorship of Hebrews is uncertain, it entered the New Testament by its connection with Paul.

2. The Nature and Purpose of the Gospels

- a. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are a new literary genre that was created by the preaching of the apostles.
- b. The Greek word **gospel** (*'euaggelion*) was originally a royal political term for the news of the birth of an heir to the throne, the coronation of a king, his visit to his people, and his victory over his enemies. This noun comes from the verb *'euaggeizein*, which means: “to proclaim good news.”
- c. This verb is used in the LXX to translate Hebrew verb *bissar* which was used in the Old Testament for the announcement of three kinds of news about God
 - Access to God’s presence at the temple (Ps. 96:2; 1 Chr.16:23)
 - God’s victory over his enemies and his return with his people to his temple in Jerusalem (Isa 40:9; 41:27; 52:7-8)
 - Proclamation of God’s amnesty by the Messiah (Isa 61:1-3)
- d. Jesus used the term to describe his proclamation of God’s kingdom (Mark 1:14-15) and his amnesty to the poor oppressed people (Luke 4:18-21; 7:22).
- e. The apostles used the term to proclaim Jesus as the Christ, the promised messianic king (Mark 16:15; 1 Cor 15:1-5; 2 Tim 1:8-11).
- f. Since the apostolic preaching of the gospel asserted that Jesus was the Christ, it took on the pattern found most fully in Acts 10:34-43
 - Baptism of Jesus as his anointing as the Messianic King (38^a)
 - His struggle to establish his kingship by defeating his rival and overcoming opposition to his rule (38^b)
 - His crucifixion as his coronation (39)
 - His resurrection and ascension as his enthronement (40-42)
 - The nature and benefits of his rule (43)

g. Pattern of preaching about Jesus by the apostles in the Early Church

Passage	Baptism	Miracles	Death	Burial	Resurrection	Appearance	Status of Jesus	Gift of risen Lord
Acts 2:22-36		X	X	X	X	X	Lord, Christ	Holy Spirit
Acts 3:12-16			X		X	X	God’s servant/ child	Healing
Acts 4:10-14			X		X		Christ	Healing
Acts 5:29-32			X		X	X	Prince, Saviour	Repentance and forgiveness
Acts 10:34-43	X	X	X		X	X	Lord and Judge	Forgiveness
Acts 13:16-41			X	X	X	X	Son of God	Forgiveness
1 Cor 15:3-8			X	X	X	X	Christ	Forgiveness
Rom 4:24-25			X		X		Lord	Forgiveness and justification

- h. This pattern of apostolic preaching determined the shape of Mark's gospel which shows how Jesus became the Christ, the anointed King (Mark 1:1).
- i. Since Mark influenced the arrangement of the other gospels, he most likely created this literary genre.

The Gospels

1. Saint Matthew

1. Origin

a. Its author

- Tax-collector mentioned in Matthew 9:9: also known as Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27-32)
- Appeal two parables: debtors in 18:21-35 and the two sons in 21:28-32
- Education as a scribe: application to himself the words of Jesus in 13:52

b. Its audience

- Jewish Christians in Antioch
- Evidence
 - ◆ No explanation for Jewish customs (eg. 15:1-2; cf. Mark 7:1-5)
 - ◆ Descent of Jesus in 1:1-17 from David and Abraham
 - ◆ Reference to the fulfilment of the Old Testament (eg. 1:22)
 - ◆ Use of Jewish theological terms like “the kingdom of heaven”
 - ◆ Report of Jewish gossip about Judas in 27:8 and the stolen body of Jesus in 28:15
 - ◆ Emphasis on priority of Jesus' mission to Israel in 10:5-6

2. Purpose: see Matthew 28:18-20

This gospel was used as a catechism for the instruction of people for baptism

- To show the authority of Jesus as the messianic King of heaven and earth who delegates his authority to his disciples
- To show how Jesus is the teacher of God's word who commissions his disciples/students to make disciples by baptising and teaching what he has commanded
- To show how the mission of Jesus extends from the Jews to all the Gentiles
- To proclaim the hidden presence of Jesus with his disciples until his final public revelation as Messiah at the end of the world

3. Concentric Structure of Matthew

- Origin and anointing of Jesus as the Messiah: 1-4
- **Sermon 1**: the *torah* of the Messiah: 5-7
- Miracles of the Messiah: 8-9
- **Sermon 2**: the mandate of the apostles: 10
- Rejection of the Messiah by Israel: 11-12
- **Sermon 3**: the mysteries of God's kingdom: 13:1-52
- Christ's acknowledgment as the Messiah by his disciples: 13:53-17
- **Sermon 4**: the church as the new Israel: 18

- True and false discipleship: 19-22
- **Sermon 5**: the judgment of the world by the Messiah: 23-25
- Enthronement as Messiah in his death and resurrection: 26-28

4. Main Themes

- Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament
 - ◆ The Law
 - Jesus as the true Israel (2:15)
 - Jesus as the true temple (12:6)
 - Jesus as the second Moses (5:21-22; cf. 15:17-20)
 - ◆ The Prophets
 - Jesus as the Messiah (1:1; 2:5-6), the saviour (1:21) and judge of God's people (12:41)
 - Jesus as the suffering servant of God (8:17)
 - Fulfilment of prophecy through Jesus (13:13-17)
 - ◆ The Writings
 - Jesus as a greater wisdom teacher than Solomon (12:42)
 - Jesus as wisdom incarnate (11:19)
 - Jesus as the recipient of Israel's praises (21:15-16)
- The authoritative teaching of the Messiah which fulfils the Old Testament and corrects the teachers of Israel (5:17-20)
- Faith in Jesus which empowers the disciple to follow him and to fulfil the law of love (5:43-48; 14:22-32)
- Delegation of his authority as the Messiah to his disciples to share in his destiny and mission (16:17-19; 18:18-20; cf. 28:18-20)
- Son's fellowship with God the royal Father as a gift to his disciples (11:25-30; cf. 5:16,22,23,45,48; 6:1,6,8-15,18,26; 7:11,21)
- Church as the eschatological assembly of God's forgiven, forgiving people (18:21-35)
- Hidden growth and final revelation of God's kingdom (13:24-33)

The Gospels

2. Saint Mark

1. Origin and audience

- a. Author: Mark John
 - Son of Mary, the owner of a two-storied house in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12; cf. Acts 1:13; Mark 14:51)
 - Cousin of Barnabas and co-worker with him and Paul (Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:37-39; Col. 4:10; Philemon 23)
 - Co-worker with Paul (2 Tim 4:11) and Peter at Rome (1 Pet 4:14)
 - Bishop of Alexandria where he died as a martyr
- e. According to Papias (c. 140 AD), Mark was Peter's interpreter at Rome where he wrote down Peter's gospel:

“Mark had been the interpreter of Peter, and wrote down accurately, though not in order, everything that he remembered that had been said or done by the Lord. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward ... attended Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs of his hearers, but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles.”
- c. The story is told from Peter's point of view (see 1:16ff).
- d. It shows how the church at Rome began with the centurion's recognition of Jesus in 15:39 at the foot of the cross.

2. Purpose

- a. See Mark 1:1
 - The beginning of the Gospel, its origin and foundation
 - Gospel of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God
- b. See Mark 16:1-8 with its strange ending
 - Incomplete story with no appearance by the risen Lord
 - Preparation of the reader for the oral proclamation of the apostolic testimony in the Church
- c. Mark's gospel was probably compiled as an evangelist's handbook
 - To proclaim that the crucified Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
 - To show how his disciples share in his life and work, suffering and glory

3. Arrangement

- a. Like the sermons in Acts, the gospel of Mark is concerned with the identity of Jesus.

- b. It follows the pattern of apostolic preaching to show that Jesus is the Christ, God's royal Son
 - Anointing at his baptism
 - Battle to defeat his rival(s), rally support and consolidate his claim on the throne
 - Coronation by the soldiers at his trial
 - Enthronement on the cross
- c. Departure from the usual pattern by its emphasis on the rule of Christ from the cross to highlight the scandal of his claim to be the Christ
- d. Construction around the gradual disclosure of Christ's hidden identity
- e. Theological significance of the order and process of revelation
 - Acknowledgment by the Father as his Son to Jesus at his baptism (1:11) and to three disciples at his transfiguration (9:8)
 - Recognition by the demons as God's holy Son (1:24; 3:11; 5:7)
 - Confession of Jesus as the Messiah by Peter as the spokesman of the twelve: limited understanding due to their fear of the cross (8:11-33)
 - Public confession by Jesus of his messianic status under oath before the high priest (14:61-62; cf. 15:2)
 - Centurion as first person to recognise Jesus as God's Son (15:39)

4. Structure

- Anointing of Jesus as the messianic Son of God: 1:1-15
- Work of Jesus as God's Son: 1:16–8:26
 - ◆ Acceptance of his authority: disciples v opponents (1:16–3:12)
 - ◆ Acceptance of his teaching: faith v unbelief (3:13–6:6)
 - ◆ Involvement of the disciples in the mission of Jesus (6:7–8:26)
- Death of Jesus as his enthronement: 8:27–16:8
 - ◆ Instruction of his disciples (8:27–10:52). Note the three passion predictions in 8:31-32; 9:30-32; 10:32-34.
 - ◆ The judgment of Jerusalem by Jesus (11:1–13:37)
 - ◆ The passion of Jesus as his assumption of kingship (14:1–16:8)

5. Main Themes

- Mystery of the crucified Christ and the hidden kingdom of God (4:11-12, 21-25)
- The Messiah as the suffering servant who sacrifices his life for his people (10:42-45)
- Revelation of the messianic Son of God in his trial and crucifixion(14:61-62; 15:39)
- Exercise of the authority of Jesus over Satan in his teaching, exorcisms and miracles (1:21-34)
- Delegation of his authority to the twelve disciples (3:13-14; 16:14-20)
- Discipleship as accompaniment of Jesus on the way of the cross (8:27-38; 10:28-34)

The Gospels

3. Saint Luke

1. Origin

a. Author

- Gentile physician (Col 4:10-11, 14)
- One of Paul's circle of pastors (Philemon 24)
- Travelling companion with Paul on his second and third missionary journeys, as well as on his trip to Rome. (See the **we** sections in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16)
- Only person to stick with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (2 Tim 4:11)
- Reception of his material from people around Jesus (Luke 1:2)

b. Audience

- Roman official named Theophilus (Luke 1:1-3; cf. Acts 1:1) = “lover of God” = any person in search of God
- Cultured God-fearing pagan readers

2. Purpose

- a. It was originally written as the first book in a **two-volumed apologetic history** of the early church with the book of Acts as its continuation.
- b. This apology was meant to show how the gospel of Jesus, the Lord of the world, came from Jerusalem to Rome.
- c. This connection has been broken by the present arrangement of books which uses Luke to introduce John and Acts to introduce the Pauline epistles.
- d. Its purpose is given in 1:1-4 and 24:45-47.
 - To explain and proclaim the historical foundations of the Christian faith in an orderly fashion
 - To preach repentance and forgiveness to all people in the name of Jesus

3. Structure: beginning and end in the temple

- Luke's preface: 1:1-4
- Birth of Jesus and his connection with the temple: 1:5-2:52
- Anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit: 3:1-4:13
- Ministry in Galilee 4:14-9:50
- Pilgrimage to Jerusalem with his disciples as the beginning of his ascension: 9:51-19:44
- The rejection and exaltation of Jesus as Lord in Jerusalem: 19:45-24:53

4. Main Themes

- Coming of Messiah to city and temple to extend the worship of God and his salvation to whole world (2:22-32; 24:51-52)
- Universal scope of his lordship and the gospel (2:1-2,10-14; 21:35; 24:47; cf. 3:1-2, 38; 2:10-14)
- Jesus as the Spirit-filled Messiah and his rejection by God's people (4:14-21; cf. 5:17, 8:46; 10:21)
- Salvation and exaltation of lost and lowly people, like sinners, tax collectors, women and the thief on the cross (19:10; cf. 8:2-3; 15:1; 23:39-43)
- Wisdom of Jesus in his table fellowship with righteous and unrighteous people (15:2; cf. Prov 9:1-12): see nine banquet scenes.
 - ◆ Jesus as guest in Levi's house with tax collectors (5:27-39)
 - ◆ Jesus as guest in the house of Simon the Pharisee with the anointing by a sinful woman (7:31-50)
 - ◆ Jesus as host in feeding 5,000 people with the help of the Twelve (9:10-17)
 - ◆ Jesus as guest of Mary and Martha (10:38-42)
 - ◆ Jesus as guest in a Pharisee's house with a discussion on washing and three woes each to the Pharisees and scribes (11:37-52)
 - ◆ Jesus as guest with a leading Pharisee on the Sabbath with healing of drowsied man and the parable of the great banquet (14:1-24)
 - ◆ Jesus as guest of Zachaeus (19:1-10)
 - ◆ Jesus as the host at the last supper and the waiter of his guests (22:7-38)
 - ◆ The risen Lord as host to two disciples at Emmaus (24:28-35)
- Divine and human joy at the repentance and salvation of people (2:10-14; 15:7, 10, 23-24; cf. 10:17-24; 24:52-53)
- Jesus as man of prayer (3:21; 5:16; cf. 6:12; 9:18,28; 11:1; 22:41)
- Discipline of discipleship
 - ◆ Possessiveness of *mammon* (possessions) (16:10-15; cf. 8:14; 12:43-48; 16:1-9, 19-31; 18:18-30; 19:11-27)
 - ◆ Cost of discipleship (14:25-34; cf. 12:49-53; 19:1-10)

The Gospels

4. Saint John

1. Author

- Self-designation as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20,24; cf. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2) and “the other disciple” (18:15-16; 20:2-8)
- Zebedee as his father and Salome as his mother (Matt 4:21-22; 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1; John 19:25)
- Co-apostle with his brother of James: nicknamed *Sons of Thunder* by Jesus (Mark 3:17; cf. Luke 9:54)
- Partnership of James and John with Peter and Andrew as fishermen in Capernaum (Mark 1:16-20)
- Disciple of John the Baptist before his call by Jesus (John 1:35,40)
- Member of inner circle of apostles together with James and Peter
 - ◆ Called first by Jesus (Mark 1:16-20)
 - ◆ Presence with Jesus when he raised the ruler's daughter (Mark 5:37-43)
 - ◆ Witness of the transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2-13)
 - ◆ Instruction with Andrew about the end of the world (Mark 13:3)
 - ◆ Companions with Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:33-42)
- Couch next to Jesus at the last supper (John 13:23; 24:20)
- Commission to care for Mary, the mother of Jesus (19:25-27)
- Leader of the church in Jerusalem together with Peter and James (Acts 8:14; Gal 2:9)
- Ministry in Ephesus where he was known by Papias and where he probably wrote his gospel
- Exile to Patmos by Diocletian (Rev 1:9)
- Only apostle who died a natural death (cf. John 21:20-23)

2. Purpose: John 20:30-31

- a. St John calls his gospel a book of **signs** (cf. 2:11,23; 4:54)
- b. These signs were the seven miracles that foreshadowed what Jesus accomplished by his death and resurrection.
- c. The book serves a **twofold purpose**
 - Testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Note the **seven** sets of witnesses to Jesus in John 5:30-40 and 15:26-27.
 - ◆ Jesus himself
 - ◆ God the Father
 - ◆ John the Baptist
 - ◆ The works of Jesus
 - ◆ The Old Testament
 - ◆ The apostles
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit

- Proclamation of eternal life received by believers in Jesus as God's Son

Note the **seven** “I am” sayings of Jesus

- ◆ Bread of life (6:35)
- ◆ Light of the world (8:12)
- ◆ The door (10:7)
- ◆ The good shepherd (10:11)
- ◆ The resurrection and the life (11:25)
- ◆ The way, the truth and the life (14:6)
- ◆ The vine (15:1)

d. **Seven** miracles function as signs with this two-fold purpose in John 2-12

- The wedding in Cana (2:1-22)
- The healing of the official's son (4:43-54)
- The healing of the cripple (5:1-47)
- The feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15)
- Walking on the lake (6:16-24)
- The healing of the blind man (9:1-41)
- The raising of Lazarus (11:1-54)

e. These signs point to the great “sign” of his resurrection in John 13-22.

3. Structure of John

a. The Prologue: 1:1-18

b. The Book of Signs: 1:19-12:50

- The ministry of Jesus in Palestine: 1:19-4:54
 - ◆ The first witnesses (1:19-51)
 - ◆ **The first sign:** wedding in Cana with cleansing of temple (2:1-22)
 - ◆ Discourses about Jesus as the life-giver (3:1-4:42)
 - ◆ **The second sign:** healing of the official's son (4:43-54)
- The revelation of Jesus as God's Son and the unbelief of the Jews 5:1-12:50
 - ◆ **The third sign:** the healing of a cripple with a discourse on the life-giving authority of Jesus (5:1-47)
 - ◆ **Fourth and fifth signs:** feeding of 5,000 and walking on water, with a discourse on Jesus as the bread of life (6:1-71)
 - ◆ Conflict between Jesus and his opponents (7:1-11:54)
 - Jesus the light of the world (7:1-8:59)
 - **Sixth sign:** the healing of the blind man (9:1-41)
 - Jesus the good shepherd (10:1-42)
 - **Seventh sign:** the raising of Lazarus (11:1-54)
- Final pilgrimage to Jerusalem (11:55-12:50)

c. Glorification of Jesus as God's Son: 13-21

- The legacy of Jesus to his disciples: 13-17
- The suffering and death of the king: 18-19

- The appearances of the risen Lord: 20-21

4. Main Themes

- Unity of Jesus the Son with his heavenly Father (10:22-30)
- Incarnation of the Son as the revelation of God the Father and of human unbelief (1:9-14, 16-18; 3:19-21; 14:22-24)
- Trial of Jesus as the trial of the sinful world (12:31-33; cf. 5:24; 16:8-11)
- Body of Jesus as the temple of God and the place for the worship of the Father (1:14; 2:21; 4:20-24)
- Participation in the eternal life and love of the Father through the Son (3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 17:1-5, 20-26)
- The work of the life-giving Holy Spirit
 - ◆ Gift of eternal life through rebirth (3:3-8; 6:63; 7:37-39)
 - ◆ Advocate of the risen Lord Jesus (14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15)

G. The Epistles

1. The Order of the Epistles

- a. Pauline Epistles
 - Ecclesiastical : Romans ► 2 Thessalonians
 - Pastoral : 1 Timothy ► Philemon.
- b. Catholic Epistles: Hebrews ► Jude

2. Acts as the Introduction to Paul's Epistles

- a. It establishes the identity and authority of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles.
- b. It identifies the congregations that received the letters and Paul's connection with them.

3. Basic Form of Paul's Letters

- a. Opening (1 Cor 1:1-9)
 - (1) Address
 - Name of writer (Romans, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) or writers (rest of letters)
 - Name(s) of recipients)
 - (2) Greeting: theological and liturgical enactment with bestowal of God's gifts
 - (3) Prayer of thanksgiving or praise (except in Galatians)
- b. Body
- c. Conclusion (1 Cor 16:19-24)
 - (1) Greetings from the writer(s) and other Christians
 - (2) Liturgical greeting

4. Liturgical Setting of Paul's Letters to Churches

See 1 Cor 1:3 and 16:20-24.

- a. The letter was read instead of the sermon (Col 4:16).
- b. This is shown by the theological greeting which bestows God's grace and peace at the beginning of each letter (1 Cor 1:3; cf Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2b; 1 Thess 1:1b; 2 Thess 1:2).
- c. 1 Cor 16:20-24 shows that the reading of the letter was followed by the communion liturgy.
 - The exchange of the holy kiss (1 Cor 16:20b; cf. Rom 16:16; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26)
 - The anathema against the unworthy and their exclusion from the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 16:22a)
 - The prayer: 'Maranatha', ie 'Lord, come' (1 Cor 16:22b; cf. Rev 22:20b)
 - The greeting for the presence of Christ's grace (16:23; Rom 16:22b; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18b; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18)
- d. See the comments of H. Sasse, *Zeugnisse*, 1979, 55:

“Long before there were any gospels, the letters of Paul were read in the divine service, over and over again. Right from the start they were read aloud in the divine service to the congregation as a substitute for the spoken word of the apostle. This is evident from the inclusion of the oldest formulae from the Christian liturgy at their end. Thus the oldest fragment of the eucharistic liturgy is found at the end of 1 Corinthians ... The conclusion of 1 Corinthians with: "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (16:29) points to the celebration of the Lord's Supper after the reading of the letter. The Lord's Supper began with the exchange of the kiss of peace ... The writer of such a letter and the congregations whose greetings he gives, are, as it were, present in the Spirit. They join together in the fellowship of the congregations assembled far away from them at the Lord's table, just as we who live many centuries later are included with this congregation as we hear or read this ancient letter with reverence. We are part of the great communion of saints by which the whole church of God is one at all times and in all places.”

5. Places and dates of the New Testament Epistles

Decade	Books	Location	Dates
40-49	James	Jerusalem	45-48
	Galatians	Antioch in Syria	48-49, after Paul's first missionary journey
50-59	1 Thessalonians	Corinth	50-54, in Paul's second missionary journey
	2 Thessalonians	Corinth	50-54, in Paul's second missionary journey
	1 Corinthians	Ephesus	About 56, in Paul's third missionary journey
	2 Corinthians	Macedonia	About 56, in Paul's third missionary journey
	Romans	Corinth	57, in Paul's third missionary journey
60-69	Ephesians	Rome	60
	1 John	Ephesus	60-65
	2 John	Ephesus	Early 60's
	3 John	Ephesus	Early 60's
	Philippians	Rome	60-61
	Colossians	Rome	60-62
	Philemon	Rome	60-62
	1 Timothy	Macedonia?	63-66
	Titus	Macedonia?	63-66
	1 Peter	Rome?	64
	Jude	?	67-80
	2 Timothy	Rome	67
	2 Peter	Rome?	67-68
	Hebrews	?	68-69

1. ROMANS

1. Circumstances

- a. This letter was probably written in 57 AD at Corinth at the end of Paul's third missionary journey.
- b. He was about to deliver the collection for the Christians in Jerusalem before proceeding to Spain via Rome.

2. Purpose

- To announce his impending visit to Rome (1:10,15:24,29,32)
- To solicit their prayers for his coming visit to Jerusalem and then to them (15:30-32)
- To present his understanding of the Gospel and his ministry in systematic form to the Romans (1:11-12,15; 15:15-16)

3. Structure

- a. Introduction with statement of theme: 1:1-17
- b. Paul's summary of the gospel: 1:18-8:39
 - The unrighteousness of the human race (1:18-3:20)
 - Justification by grace through faith (3:21-4:25)
 - New life by the power of the Spirit for the justified (5:1-8:39)
- c. The reaction of the Jews to God's work of justification (9-11)
- d. The practice of righteousness (12:1-15:13)
- e. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)
 - Reason for the letter (15:14-33)
 - Commendation and greetings (16:1-27)

4. Main Themes

- The universality of sin and of God's judgment (1:18; 3:23)
- The role of the law in revealing and convicting sin (3:20)
- Justification by God's grace through faith in Jesus (3:21-28; 5:1; 8:1; 10:6-13)
- The gift of new life for baptised believers (6:3-11; 6:23)
- The work of the Holy Spirit in putting the old self to death and in giving life to the new self (8:9-14)
- God's righteousness in his dealing with the Jews (11:25-32)
- Good works as a bodily sacrifice to God in response to justification (12:1-2)

2. 1 CORINTHIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. 1 Corinthians was probably written in 55-56 AD towards the end of Paul's three year stay in Ephesus (16:8-9,19).
- b. Paul had received news about problems in the congregations from at least two sources
 - The family of Chloe about factions in the church (1:11), gross immorality (5:1) and misunderstanding of a previous letter (5:9-11)
 - An official letter from the church, brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:15-18), which asked for advice on marriage (7:1), food offered to idols (8:1), spiritual gifts (12:1), the resurrection of the body (15:1?), and the offering for Jerusalem (16:1)
- c. Paul sent Timothy with the letter to represent him (4:17; 16:10-11).

2. Purpose

- To deal with the pastoral problems as reported to Paul and to answer the questions in the letter from the congregation (7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1)
- To appeal to feuding groups for unity in faith and love (1:10; 4:14-16)
- To announce his intention to visit them soon (16:5-7)

3. Structure

- a. Introduction: 1:1-9
- b. The gospel as the basis for unity: 1:10-4:21
- c. The incompatibility of immorality with the gospel: 5:1-6:20
- d. The gospel as applied to problems in the church: 7:1-15:58
 - Marriage and celibacy (7:1-40)
 - Food offered to idols (8:1-11:1)
 - Behaviour in public worship (11:2-34)
 - The use of spiritual gifts in public worship (12:1-14:40)
 - The resurrection of the body (15:1-58)
- e. Concluding remarks (16:1-24)

4. Main Themes

- The unity of the church in Christ (1:10-16; 12:12-13; see also 10:16-17; 11:17-26)
- The wisdom of the cross as revealed through the Holy Spirit (1:17-25; 2:2; 2:6-16)
- The exercise of Christian freedom in service (9:19-23; 10:23-24)
- The use of spiritual gifts in love for the building up of Christ's body (12:4-7; 12:24b-26; 12:31- 14:1; 14:12)

- The importance of the body and the resurrection of the body (6:12-14,19-20; 15:12-19; 15:35-57)

3. 2 CORINTHIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. Paul had written another letter before his second visit to correct the abuses in the congregation (1:23-2:4; 7:8-12).
- b. On his second he clashed with a leading member (2:5-10) and was rejected by them, because he was not a proper apostle and did not match up with other 'apostles' (11:4-6,12-13; 12:11).
- c. Paul sent Titus to investigate after he had left (7:6-7,13-15; 8:6; 12:18).
- d. After the return of Titus, he wrote this letter in 57 AD to express his relief and to sort all the remaining difficulties (2:8; 13:10).
- e. This letter was sent via Titus and a couple of other Christians to announce his third visit and to solicit support for the Christians in Jerusalem (8:6,16-19,23; 9:3-5).

2. Purpose

- To remove obstacles and pave the way for a third visit by Paul (12:14; 13:1)
- To arrange for the collection of the offering for Jerusalem (9:5)
- To defend his apostolate (12:11)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-2
- b. Defence of Paul's behaviour as an apostle in Corinth: 1:3-7:16
 - Paul's thanksgiving (1:3-11)
 - Paul's integrity (1:12-2:11)
 - Paul's ministry (2:12-6:10)
 - Paul's confidence (6:11-7:16)
- c. The collection for Jerusalem: 8-9 (see also Rom 15:25-27 and 1 Cor 16:1-4)
- d. Defence of Paul's apostolate: 10:1-13:10
- e. Conclusion: 13:11-13

4. Main Themes

- The apostolate as the ministry of reconciliation (5:17-21; see also 2:14-17)
- The dependence of the apostle on God's mercy (4:1)
- The glory of an apostolic ministry (4:4-6; see also 3:4-18)
- The triumph of God's grace in human suffering dying and weakness (4:7-15; see also 1:3-7)
- Suffering and weakness as the mark of a true apostle (12:1-10; see also 6:3-10)
- The gain of Christian giving (9:6-15)

4. GALATIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. After Paul's initial work in these churches (Acts 13:13-14:20), certain Jewish agitators moved in and unsettled the Gentile converts by claiming that they had to be circumcised to receive the blessing of Abraham (1:6-9; 3:1; 5:12).
- b. They belonged to the circumcision party and claimed to represent James (2:12).
- c. They demanded that the Gentiles be circumcised and keep the whole ceremonial law of the Old Testament (4:10; 5:2-12; 6:11-13; see also 2:3-5)
- d. They denigrated Paul's authority and accused him of trying to win popularity by his leniency (1:10).
- e. Paul wrote this letter about 48-49 AD from Antioch.

2. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-5
- b. The origin and confirmation of Paul's gospel: 1:6-2:21
 - Reason for the letter (1:6-10)
 - Paul's commission (1:11-17)
 - Confirmation by the apostles (1:18-2:10)
 - Clash with Peter over the gospel (2:11-21)
- c. The nature of the gospel: 3-4
 - Gift of the Spirit through the gospel (3:1-5)
 - The faith of Abraham (3:6-18)
 - Faith as the purpose of the law (3:19-4:11)
 - A personal appeal (4:12-20)
 - Freedom and slavery (4:21-31)
- d. The life of freedom in Christ: 5-6
 - The freedom of faith in Christ (5:1-12)
 - The freedom to love in the Spirit (5:13-6:10)
 - Conclusion (6:11-18)

3. Purpose

- To counteract the propaganda of the circumcision party (5:12; 6:12-13) and to assert his authority as the apostle to the Gentiles (2:1-9)
- To defend the gospel of free grace and to explain the freedom it gives (1:11-12; 5:1)

4. Main Themes

- The death of Jesus as our redemption from the curse of the law (3:10-14)
- The justification of Jews and Gentiles by faith in Jesus Christ (2:15-21; 3:6-9)
- The gift of the Spirit and of sonship through the hearing of the gospel and reception of baptism (3:2-5; 3:26-4:7)
- The purpose of the law to curb sin and lead to faith in Christ (3:19-24)
- The freedom of the Christian that comes from faith and results in love (5:1,6,13-15)
- The rule of the Spirit in the Christian (5:16-26)

5. EPHESIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. This treatise was written by Paul in 60 AD during his imprisonment in Rome or in Caesarea (3:1,13; 4:1; 6:20).
- b. It was written as a circular letter to Ephesus and other churches in Asia Minor.
- c. It was sent via Tychicus and Onesimus (6:21-22; see also Col. 4:7-9 and Philemon).
- d. He wrote it as a summary of his teaching on the church.

2. Purpose

- To widen their spiritual horizons to understand the universal scope of Christ's rule for and through the Church (1:9-10)
- To urge them to maintain the unity given by Christ through the Holy Spirit in the church (4:1-3)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-2
- b. God's plan for universal reunification in Christ: 1-3
 - Praise for the mystery of God's unifying purpose in Christ (1:3-14)
 - Prayer for enlightenment: the riches of God's grace in Christ (1:15-2:10)
 - Reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (2:11-22)
 - Paul's ministry of God's grace in preaching and prayer (3:1-21)
- c. The life of unity with each other in Christ: 4:1-6:20
 - The call to maintain and promote the unity of the Church (4:1-16)
 - The call to break with disunifying heathen ways (4:17-5:20)
 - The call for subordination within the family (5:21-6:9)
 - The call for spiritual warfare against Satan (6:10-20)
- d. Conclusion: explanation and greeting: 6:21-24

4. Main Themes

- God's adoption of us and his gift to us of all spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3-8)
- Our participation by grace in Christ's heavenly rule (2:1-10)
- The mystery of God's purpose to unite heaven and earth through Jesus (1:9-10; see also 1:17-21; 3:1-6)
- The gift of access to God the Father through Jesus in the church (2:17-18; 3:12)
- The role of the church as Christ's body and bride (5:23,25-27) and God's holy temple (2:19-22) in God's plan for reunification (1:22-23; 3:7-13; 4:7-16)
- The seven gifts for Christian unity (4:1-6) and for spiritual warfare (6:10-20)

6. PHILIPPIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. When Paul was in prison in Ephesus or Caesarea or Rome in 60-61 AD (1:7,12-14; 4:22), he received money from this congregation (4:10-18) via Epaphroditus (2:25-29).
- b. The congregation at Philippi had experienced disunity in the face of some persecution (1:27-30; 4:2) and the insistence of some Jews on circumcision (3:2-3,18-19).

2. Purpose

- To send Epaphroditus home (2:25-30)
- To announce the visit of Timothy (2:19-24)
- To thank them for their money (4:14-19)

3. Structure

- a. Introduction: 1:1-11
 - Greetings (1:1-2)
 - Paul's prayer for them (1:3-11)
- b. Paul's encouragement of them: 1:12-2:18
 - Information about Paul's imprisonment and plans (1:12-2:6)
 - The need for unity in Christ (1:27-2:18)
- c. Practical matters: 2:19 -4:20
 - The coming of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-29)
 - Warning against those who require circumcision (3:1-4:1)
 - The need for reconciliation (4:2-3)
 - Christian joy: its source and fruits (4:4-7)
 - Thanks for the gift (4:10-19)
- d. Concluding greetings: 4:21-23

4. Main Themes

- Progress in joy (1:25-26) with rejoicing in the Lord and in each other (2:17-18; 4:4-7)
- Christian maturity by sharing in Christ's death and resurrection (3:7-15; 3:20-21)
- Christian humility as modelled and given by Christ (2:1-11)
- Christian excellence as the fruit of righteousness (1:9-10; 4:8-9)
- Christian giving as partnership in the Gospel (1:5-7; 4:17-20)

7. COLOSSIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. The gnostics taught that by “knowledge/awareness” they transcended the material world and entered the heavenly realm (2:12-13; 3:1).
- b. A person could reach this level of higher consciousness and gain supernatural wisdom and insight in the secret workings of the cosmos (2:8,20,23) by asceticism (2:20-23), observance of sacred seasons (2:16), and the worship with angels and heavenly powers (2:8,18,20) as their guides to achieve visionary experiences (2:18).
- c. For them Jesus was but the first of a hierarchy of intermediary, elemental powers (2:8,20) that led a person to the ‘fullness’ of divinity, complete divine consciousness (1:19; 2:9).
- d. News of this heresy was brought to Paul in prison (4:18).
- e. Paul sent this letter in 60 AD via Tychicus (4:7-8) and the runaway slave, Onesimus (4:9), whom Paul sent back to his owner Philemon (see the letter to Philemon).
- f. The letter was to be sent on to Laodicia which, like Colossae, had been founded by Ephaphras (1:7; 4:12-13).

2. Purpose

- To combat the gnostic heresy by reminding them of the centrality of Jesus and the spiritual and ethical significance of baptism (2:8-12)
- To promote that Christian wisdom and maturity which comes from dying and rising with Christ (2:1-7,16-17)
- To encourage Archippus the leader of the Church (4:17)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1.1-2
- b. The confession of the universal Christ as the hope of glory: 1:3-29
 - Thanksgiving and intercession (1:3-15)
 - Christ the universal Lord (1:16-20)
 - Reconciliation through Christ (1:21-23)
 - Paul's responsibility for the mystery of Christ (1:24-29)
- c. The refutation of the heretics: 2:1-23
 - The basis and purpose of the Christian life (2:1-7)
 - Christ's victory over the elemental powers (2:8-15)
 - The futility of asceticism (2:16-23)

d. Admonition for living heavenly lives on earth: 3:1-4:6

- Dying and rising with Christ (3:1-17)
- Renewed family life (3:18-4:1)
- Alertness in prayer (4:2-4)
- Wise conduct with outsiders (4:5-6)

e. Conclusion: 4:7-18

4. Main themes

- The cosmic lordship and divinity of Jesus (1:15-19; 2:9)
- The mystery of Jesus and his hidden presence in the church as our hope of glory (1:25-28; see also 2:2-4; 3:1,4; 4:3)
- Christian wisdom and maturity as the fruit of faith in Christ (1:9-12; 2:6-7)
- Participation in God's fullness through baptism by dying and rising with Christ (2:9-14,20; 3:1,3) and by putting off the old nature (3:5-9) and putting on the new nature (3:10-14)

8. 1 THESSALONIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. After Paul and Silas had founded the church in Thessalonica, they were forced to leave because they were attacked by a mob that had been stirred up by their Jewish opponents (Acts 17:1-9)
- b. While at Athens, Paul sent Timothy to find out whether the congregation had survived persecution from the unbelieving Jews (2:14 - 3:5).
- c. Timothy returned with the good news of their faith and love (3:6-8) as well as their confusion about the Lord's return and the resurrection (4:13-5:11).
- d. Paul probably wrote this letter in Corinth 50-51 AD.

2. Purpose

- To express his joy in them and his desire to see them again (3:9-11)
- To encourage them to abound in love and so be established in holiness (3:12-13)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1
- b. Thanksgiving: 1:2-3:13
 - Thanksgiving for their faith, love and hope (1:2-10) with a defence of Paul's behaviour in his previous visit (2:1-12)
 - Thanksgiving for their reception of God's word despite their persecution (2:13-16) with Paul's plans for a second visit (2:17-3:13)
- c. Encouragement for holy living: 4:1-5:22
 - God's will for sanctification (4:1-8)
 - The need for love and industry (4:9-12)
 - The resurrection of the dead and Christ's return (4:13-18)
 - Alertness for Christ's return (5:1-11)
 - Behaviour in the church (5:12-22)
- d. Conclusion: 5:23-28

4. Main Themes

- Power of the gospel for Christian love and its growth (1:5; 2:13; see also 1:8-10)
- The call to holiness (4:1-8; 5:23-24)
- The hope of salvation for the living and the dead (4:13-5:11)

9. 2 THESSALONIANS

1. Circumstances

- a. As the persecution of the congregation continued, some felt that if God were just, he should punish their persecutors (1:4-5).
- b. The previous letter did not solve all the problems in the congregation about the expectation of Christ's imminent return which was aroused by a false report from Paul that the Lord's day had come (2:1-2).
- c. Some members gave up all work as they waited for Christ's return and sponged off the others (3:6-12).

2. Purpose

- To urge them to endure persecution as their preparation for God's kingdom (1:5; 1:11-12)
- To remind them that they should not believe reports of Christ's return because 'the man of lawlessness' had not yet come (2:1-12)
- To instruct the idle to earn their own living (3:6-15)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-2
- b. Thanksgiving for their growing love and persevering faith with prayer for their progress: 1:3-12
- c. Instruction on the 'man of lawlessness' (2:1-12) with thanksgiving (2:13-14, encouragement (2:15), and blessing (2:16-17)
- d. Request for prayer (3:1-4) with another blessing (3:5)
- e. Instruction on the need to work for a living: 3:6-15
- f. Conclusion: 3:16-18

4. Main themes

- The hope of glory (1:6-12; 2:13-14)
- The mystery of lawlessness and the man of lawlessness (2:1-12)
- Working for a living (3:6-13)

10. 1 TIMOTHY

1. Circumstances of the Letter

- a. Timothy, the son of a pagan father and Jewish mother, was one of Paul's closest associates (2 Tim 1:5; Acts 16:1-3; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4).
- b. When Paul went to Macedonia, he left Timothy in charge of the congregation in Ephesus to counteract the heretics there (1:3).
- c. They used the law to promote gnostic speculation (1:3-7), aimed at achieving divine consciousness (6:3-5) by the practice of celibacy and vegetarianism (4:1-3).
- d. This higher level of consciousness was supposed to lead to material prosperity (6:3-5).

2. Purpose

- To remind Timothy of his task to combat heresy in Ephesus (1:3)
- To give advice on the proper organisation of the church (3:14-15)
- To encourage Timothy in his work as a pastor (4:12-16)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-2
- b. Paul's charge to Timothy for the church in Ephesus: 1:3-3:16
 - The refutation of heresy by sound doctrine (1:3-11)
 - The power of the Gospel as shown in Paul's conversion (1:12-17)
 - The need to wage spiritual warfare (1:18-20)
 - The nature and scope of public prayer (2:1-7)
 - Behaviour of men and women in worship (2:9-15)
 - Qualifications of bishops and deacons (3:1-13)
 - The character of the church as God's household (3:14-16)
- c. The task of Timothy as a pastor in Ephesus: 4:1-16
- d. Treatment of groups in the church: 5:1-6:19
 - General principle: treatment of people as members of a family (5:1-2)
 - Treatment of widows (5:3-15)
 - Treatment of elders/pastors (5:17-25)
 - Behaviour of slaves (6:1-2)
- e. Conclusion: 6:3-22

- Warning against riches (6:3-10)
- Behaviour of a pastor (6:11-16)
- Advice for the wealthy (6:17-19)
- Concluding admonition and blessing (6:20-22)

4. Main Themes

- Sound teaching based on the gospel (1:8-17; see also 1:5; 2:5-7; 4:6,16; 6:3)
- Value of godliness (4:7-8; cf. 1:3-5,17-19; 3:4; 6:3,6-8,17-19)
- Qualifications for a pastor and deacon (3:1-13). Note the prohibition of women as pastors in 2:12.
- Duties of a pastor (2:1-5; 4:11-13; see also 4:14-16)
- The need for a pastor to set a good example (4:12; see 6:11-12)

11. 2 Timothy

1. Circumstances

- a. Paul wrote this letter in Rome in 67 AD to Timothy in Ephesus (1:16-18; 2:9).
- b. Even though no one supported him in his trial, he was still able to make a powerful defence of the gospel (4:16).
- c. He sensed that his end was near and so asked Timothy to come with Mark to visit him in Rome (4:6-9,11,13,21).
- d. He was worried by the spread of the gnostic heresy in Asia Minor (1:15; 2:16-18)

2. Purpose

- To ask Timothy to visit him, before he was put to death (4:11)
- To encourage Timothy to accept suffering like Paul as a minister of the gospel (4:5)
- To urge Timothy to remain faithful to apostolic doctrine (1:13-14) and to ensure its faithful transmission (2:1-2)
- To warn against the dangers of heresy (4:3-4)

3. Structure

- a. Introduction: 1:1-7
 - Greeting (1:1-2)
 - Thanksgiving for Timothy's faith (1:3-7)
- b. Paul's instruction to Timothy: 1:8- 4:5
 - Imitation of Paul's boldness in accepting suffering (1:8-12)
 - Imitation of Paul's faithfulness in teaching (1:13-2:13)
 - Treatment of heretics (2:14-26)
 - Avoidance of libertines (3:1-9)
 - Imitation of Paul's life as a teacher of the Scriptures (3:10-17)
 - Persistence in preaching the Word of Christ (4:1-5)
- c. Conclusion: 4:6-22
 - Paul's confidence in the face of martyrdom (4:6-8)
 - Personal matters (4:9-18)
 - Final greetings and blessing (4:19-22)

4. Main Themes

- Gift of the Holy Spirit in ordination (1:6-7; see also 1 Tim.4:14)
- Qualities of a good pastor (2:20-26)
- Use by the pastor of the Old Testament and the words of Jesus for teaching (2:15; 3:14-17; 4:1-5)
- Faithfulness in transmitting apostolic teaching (1:13-14; 2:1-2; 4:1-5)
- Suffering for the gospel (1:8-12; see also 2:3,8-13; 3:10-13; 4:5,6-8)

12. TITUS

1. Circumstances

- a. Paul had placed Titus in charge of the churches in Crete (1:5).
- b. He sent Titus to ordain pastors and establish them on a sound, doctrinal basis (1:9; 2:1,10).
- c. There had been some trouble from a few Jewish legalists who insisted on circumcision and gnostics who were strong on religious speculation but led immoral lives (1:10-16).
- d. Paul wrote this letter between 63-66 AD to tell Titus that he intended to send Artemas and Tychicus to replace him soon (3:12).

2. Purpose

- To remind Titus of his task in Crete (1:5-9; 2:1-3:8)
- To encourage him to withstand and rebuke his opponents (1:13-14; 2:15; 3:8-11)
- To arrange a meeting with him in Nicopolis (3:12)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-4
- b. The task of Titus: 1:5-3:11
 - The appointment of bishops (1:5-9)
 - The refutation of heretics (1:10-16)
 - Instruction in domestic duties (2:1-15)
 - Instruction in public behaviour (3:1-8a)
 - The need to be firm and to avoid controversy (3:8b-11)
- c. Conclusion: 3:12-15

4. Main Themes

- The gospel as basis for good works (3:3-8)
- Qualifications for a bishop as the presiding pastor of a congregation (1:5-9)
- Instruction in godly living (2:1, 11-14)

13. PHILEMON

1. Circumstances

- a. Philemon was a pastor in the church at Colossae (See the mention of Archippus in verse 2 and Col 4:17).
- b. His slave Onesimus had run away from him and come to Paul in Rome where he became a Christian (10,15-16).
- c. Onesimus had looked after Paul in his imprisonment (12-13).
- d. Paul sent this letter in 60-62 AD along with the letter to the Colossians via Tychicus (Col. 4:7).

2. Purpose

- To accompany Onesimus whom Paul returned to Philemon together with Tychicus (12)
- To plead with Philemon to treat Onesimus well (10) and to offer to pay for the loss of Onesimus (18-19)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1-3
- e. Thanksgiving: 4-7
- f. The case of Onesimus: 8-20
- g. Concluding remarks (21-25)

4. Main themes

- Christian love (4-8)
- The 'brotherhood' of all Christians (1, 7, 16, 20)

14. HEBREWS

1. Circumstances

- a. This sermon in the form of a letter was written by an unknown author to an unnamed group of Christians in Rome (13:24).
- b. The author was an associate of Timothy and was probably therefore one of Paul's co-workers (13:23).
- c. The recipients of the letter were probably converts from Judaism who were in danger of denying Christ out of nostalgia for the liturgical riches of worship at the temple (10:26-31).
- d. They had suffered some persecution (10:32-34) and faced the prospect of further suffering (12:3-7).

2. Purpose

- a. The book is a 'word of exhortation' (13:22) to admonish those whose faith was wavering
 - To pay careful attention to the message of salvation (2:1-4)
 - To hold fast the confession of Christ the heavenly high priest (4:14,16)
 - To persevere in following Christ even in suffering (12:1-4).
- b. The letter announces the author's intention to visit the recipients together with Timothy (13:23).

3. Structure

- a. The theophany of God in his Son: 1:1-4:13
 - Christ as the perfect revelation of God (1:1-4)
 - Superiority of Christ over the angels (1:5-2:18)
 - Superiority of Christ over Moses (3:1-4:3)
- b. Christ as the high priest in the heavenly sanctuary: 4:14-10:18
 - Confession of Christ as the divinely appointed high priest (4:14-5:10)
 - The work of Jesus as high priest (5:11-6:20)
 - His eternal priesthood (7:1-28)
 - His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (8:1-9:28)
 - His single sacrifice for sin (10:1-18)
- c. Access to God's presence through Jesus: 10:19-12:29

- Worship as access by faith to God the Father's presence (10:19-39)
- Examples of such faith (11:1-40)
- Perseverance in suffering for participation in God's holiness (12:1-14)
- Warning against rejection of God's grace in worship (12:15-28)

d. Final exhortations and conclusion: 13:1-25

4. Main Themes

- The theophany of God in his Son (1:1-4)
- Ministry of Christ as the high priest in the heavenly sanctuary
 - His identification with sinners (2:9-18)
 - His qualification for the priesthood (7:26-28)
 - His eternal intercession (7:23-25)
 - His service in the heavenly sanctuary (9:11-14)
 - His single sacrifice for purification and sanctification (9:24-28; see also 10:10, 12-14; 13:12)
- Nature of Christian worship
 - Entry into God's rest (4:1-10)
 - Reception of mercy and grace from God (4:14-16)
 - Entry into the heavenly sanctuary (10:19-22)
 - Participation in the heavenly assembly (12:22-24)
 - Presentation of God-pleasing sacrifices (13:15-16)
- Nature of faith
 - Jesus as the source and goal of faith (12:1-2)
 - Faith as the conviction of things hoped for as promised by God (6:11-20; 11:1; see also 11:2-40)
 - Faith as confidence to enter God's presence (10:19-22; see also 3:6,14)

15. JAMES

1. Circumstances

- a. There is no clear reason for this circular letter written either by James, the brother of Jesus, which is most likely (Acts 12: 17; 21:18; Gal 1:19; 2:9-12; 1 Cor 15:7), or by the apostle James, the son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:3).
- b. It is written in 45-48 AD to Jewish Christians scattered around the Roman Empire (1:1).
- c. In the tradition of wisdom it tackles general, practical problems.

2. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1
- b. The school of faith: 1:2-2:26
 - Maturity through testing (1:2-18)
 - Hearing and doing (1:19-27)
 - Faith and snobbery (2:1-13)
 - Faith and works (2:14-26)
- c. Would-be teachers: 3:1-18
 - The power of the tongue (3:1-12)
 - Two kinds of wisdom (3:13-18)
- d. The frustration of worldliness: 4:1-5:6
 - Selfish desire (4:1-10)
 - Gossip (4:11-12)
 - False security (4:13-17)
 - Riches through exploitation (5:1-6)
- e. Christian conduct: 5:7-20
 - Patience (5:7-11).
 - Avoidance of oaths (5:12).
 - Intercessory prayer (5:13-18).
 - Pastoral care (5:19-20).

3. Purpose

- To give instruction in Christian wisdom and to promote spiritual maturity (1:2-7)

4. Main Themes

- Christian maturity through prayer and perseverance in suffering (1:2-4)
- Earthly and heavenly wisdom (1:5-8; 3:13-18)
- The royal law/teaching of love (2:8) which is the word that regenerates (1:18), saves (1:21), liberates (1:25; 2:12) and gives maturity to its doers (1:22-25)
- The connection between faith and works (1:22-27; 2:14-26)

16. I PETER

1. Circumstances

- a. This letter was written by Peter (1:1) with the help of Silvanus (5:12), from Rome (5:13) in 64 AD.
- b. It was a circular letter to Christians in Asia Minor (1:1).
- c. These gentile converts (1:14,18; 2:10; 4:3-4) had experienced persecution (1:6; 3:14-17; 4:1) and were facing even worse persecution under Nero (4:12-19; 5:9-10).

2. Purpose

- To testify to them of God's grace given to them through Christ in baptism (5:12)
- To encourage them to live as holy people in an alien world (1:15; 2:11)

3. Structure (note the doxologies at 4:11 and 5:11)

- a. Address and greeting: 1:1-2
- b. Baptismal exhortation to live for God: 1:3-4:11
 - (1) Gift of new life (1:3-12)
 - (2) The call to live as God's holy people (1:13-2:10)
 - Reverence for God (1:13-21)
 - Love of each other (1:22- 2:3)
 - Priestly ministry (2:4-10)
 - (3) Living as holy aliens according to God's will (2:11-4:6)
 - Good conduct among pagans (2:11-12)
 - Subordination to rulers and respect for all (2:13-17)
 - Subordination of slaves to masters (2:18-25)
 - Subordination of wives to husbands (3:1-6)
 - Husbands' respect for wives (3:7)
 - The practice of positive retaliation against evildoers (3:8-4:6)
 - (4) Stewardship of God's grace with fellow Christians (4:7-11)
- c. Exhortation to endure suffering for Christ: 4:12-5:11
 - Joy in sharing Christ's sufferings (4:12-19)
 - Humility of leaders and members (5:1-5)
 - Humility in suffering (5:6-11)
- d. Conclusion: 5:12-14

4. Main Themes

- a. God's grace through faith in Christ
 - Salvation through the suffering and glorification of Christ (1:10-12)
 - Sacrificial death of Jesus as the foundation for faith and hope in God (1:18-22; see also 1:8-9; 2:24-25; 3:18)
 - Rebirth to new life with God through the resurrection of Jesus (1:3-5) by the preaching of the gospel (1:23-25) and the water of baptism (3:21-22)
 - Revelation of hidden salvation and glory with Christ and his glory on the last day (1:5-7; 4:13; cf. 1:13)

- b. Christian vocation
 - Calling to be God's holy children (1:14-15)
 - Calling to be God's royal priests (2:4-10)
 - Calling to suffer with Christ (2:18-25; cf. 1:6-9; 4:12-19)
 - Calling to be repay evil with blessing (3:8-17)
 - Calling to share in God's glory (5:10)

17. 2 PETER

1. Circumstances

- a. Gnostic teachers were threatening to undermine the faith of Christians by their myths (1:16; 2:1).
- b. They were antinomian (3:17) in their rejection of authority (2:10), their permissiveness (2:19), and their licentiousness, (2:2,13-14,18).
- c. They promised the gift of divine ‘consciousness’ (gnosis) to their adherents.
- d. They ridiculed the notion of Christ’s physical return (3:3-4).
- e. Peter wrote this letter to unnamed Christians in 67 AD because he feared that they would cause trouble after his death (1:12-15).

2. Purpose

- To remind his readers that they have everything they could ever hope for in Christ (1:3-8)
- To warn them against losing their stability (3:17) and forfeiting their heavenly hope by following the heretics (1:10-11)
- To leave the letter as a reminder after his death (1:12-15)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting: 1:1-2
- b. Confirmation of the call to share in God’s own glory: 1:3-3:17
 - The need to bear the full fruit of faith through participation in the divine nature of Christ (1:3-11)
 - Peter’s imminent death (1:12-15)
 - The light of prophecy as fulfilled in Christ (1:16-21)
 - The character and fate of false prophets (2:1-22)
 - The reason for the delay in Christ’s return (3:1-10)
 - Waiting for Christ’s return (3:11-17)
- c. Summary exhortation and doxology: 3:18

4. Main Themes

- Participation in God’s nature through the knowledge of God (1:2-11)
- Confirmation of prophecy by Christ’s transfiguration (1:16-21)
- The creation of a new heavens and earth at Christ’s return (3:1-13)
- The fate of the false prophets and the results of their licentiousness (2:19-20)

18. FIRST JOHN

1. Circumstances

1. St. John was the probable author of this letter (or treatise) to a nameless group of Christians between 60- 65 AD to counter the teachings of gnostic heretics (4:1).
3. They denied that God's Son had really become a real human being (4:2-3) who actually died for human sin (5:6-8), so that his blood could cleanse them (1:7).
4. They believed that, since they were sinless (1:8,10), they were not bound to keep the commandments (2:4; see also 4:20-21).

2. Purpose

- To assure them that they have complete joy (1:4) and eternal life in Jesus (5:13)
- To keep them from sinning and assure them of forgiveness (2:1)
- To remind them to love each other (2:7-11; see also 2:12-14)
- To warn them against the gnostic heretics (2:26; see also 2:21)

3. Structure

- a. Prologue: apostolic testimony to the humanity of Jesus: 1:1-4
- b. Living in the light Of God's presence: 1:5-2:29
 - Fellowship with God and each other (1:5-7)
 - First condition : break with sin (1:8-2:2)
 - Second condition : keeping the commandments (2:3-17)
 - Third Condition : avoidance of heretics (2:18-29)
- c. Living as God's children: 3:1-4:6
 - Our identity as God's children (3:1-2)
 - First condition : break with sin (3:3-9)
 - Second condition : keeping the commandments (3:10-24)
 - Third condition : avoidance of worldly heretics (4:1-6)
- d. Living in love and faith: 4:7-5:13
- e. Epilogue: praying for sinners and summary of contents: 5:14-21

4. Main Themes

- a. Participation in God's eternal life through faith in God's Son (1:2; 2:25; 5:11-13)
- b. God's abiding (3:24; 4:12-13,16)
 - with his anointing (by the Spirit) (2:27)
 - his word (2:14,24)
 - and his 'seed' (3:9)in the believers who abide
 - in him (2:6,10,24; 3:6; 4:13,16)
 - and his love (4:16)by keeping his commandments (3:24)
- c. Walking in the light by loving fellowship with each other (1:5-7; 2:3-11; 3:14-18)
- d. Criteria for testing of false prophets (4:1-6)

19. SECOND JOHN

1. Reasons

- a. This letter was written by the elder John to an unnamed congregation compared to a lady and her children or to the woman in whose house the congregation met (1,4).
- b. Many members had been led astray by the gnostic heretics (4,7).
- c. They denied the humanity of Jesus (7).

2. Purpose

- To urge those who remained faithful to love each other (5-6)
- To warn against receiving the heretics (10-11)
- To announce his impending visit (12)

3. Structure

- Greeting (1-3)
- The commandment to love (4-6)
- The avoidance of heretics (7-11)
- John's announcement of his visit (12-13)

4. Main Themes

- Walking in truth and in love (4-6)
- Remaining in the teaching of Christ (9-11)

20. THIRD JOHN

1. Circumstances

- a. The elder John had written a letter to a certain unnamed church, but its leader Diotrephes had refused to allow it to be read (9).
- b. John sent a deputation but this man refused to welcome the deputation, going so far as to excommunicate those who did (10).
- c. Gaius did offer them hospitality (3-6).
- d. John writes to commend him for this.

2. Purpose

- To recommend Demetrius as a man of integrity in the congregation (12)
- To announce his impending visit (13-14)

3. Structure

- a. Greeting (1-2)
- b. Praise for Gaius for his hospitality (3-8)
- c. Explanation about Diotrephes (9-10)
- d. Commendation of Demetrius as a leader (11-12)
- e. Announcement of visit (13-15)

4. Main Theme

- Walking in the truth (3-4)

21. JUDE

1. Circumstances

- a. Jude the brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55) probably wrote this letter to some unnamed congregation (1).
- b. The congregation had been infiltrated by heretics who denied Christ by using grace as an excuse for licentiousness and the rejection of all authority (4, 8, 16).
- c. They abused what they could not grasp (10) and scoffed at the orthodox (18-19).

2. Purpose

- To warn against these heretics (4)
- To urge the faithful to fight for their faith (3)

3. Structure

- Address (1-2)
- Defence of the faith against heretics (3-4)
- God's punishment of the ungodly (5-16; note similarity to 2 Pet 2:3-18)
- Apostolic warning against scoffers (17-19)
- Admonition of the faithful (20-23)
- Doxology (24-25)

4. Main Themes

- The nature and fate of the heretics (11-13)
- The defence of the faith (3) with reliance of God's love and the practice of mercy (20-23)

22. Summary of the Epistles

a. Romans

- Outline of Paul's theology for the Christians at Rome
- Theme: justification by grace through faith in Jesus

b. 1 Corinthians

- Paul's response to the problems put to him from the congregation in Corinth
- Theme: the wisdom of the crucified Lord Jesus

c. 2 Corinthians

- Paul's defence of his apostolate and promotion of the offering for Jerusalem
- Theme: ministry under the cross

d. Galatians

- Paul's refutation of the demand for the circumcision of male Gentiles
- Theme: the freedom of the gospel

e. Ephesians

- A theological treatise on the nature of the church
- Theme: unity in Christ

f. Philippians

- Paul's letter of thanks for a monetary gift to him in prison
- Theme: rejoicing in Christ and each other

g. Colossians

- Paul's correction of false teaching about Jesus as a spiritual teacher of spiritual consciousness
- Theme: access to the fullness of divinity in the human body of Jesus

h. 1-2 Thessalonians

- Paul's encouragement of a persecuted congregation
- Theme: the hope of Christ's return

i. 1 Timothy

- Paul's instructions to Timothy about the church in Ephesus
- Theme: healing teaching of godliness

j. 2 Timothy

- Paul's request for a visit from Timothy before the end of his imminent execution
- Theme: the work of a pastor

k. Titus

- Paul's instructions to Titus about the ordination of pastors in Crete
- Theme: pastoral care for God's people

l. Philemon

- Letter sent with the run away slave Onesimus to his master
- The brotherhood of Christ

m. Hebrews

- Letter of encouragement/exhortation to discouraged Christians
- Theme: access to the heavenly sanctuary through faith in Jesus

n. James

- Circular letter to Jewish Christians in present day Turkey
- Theme: the gift of heavenly wisdom from God through the endurance of trouble

o. 1 Peter

- Circular letter to persecuted churches in present day Turkey
- Theme: testing of faith through suffering in preparation for sharing in his glory

p. 2 Peter

- Peter's farewell letter to unnamed churches
- Theme: our physical participation in Christ's divinity

q. 1 John

- Warning against gnostic teachers to unnamed churches
- Theme: Christ's indwelling in us and our indwelling in him

r. 2 John

- Warning to a woman/congregation about antichrists who deny the incarnation.
- Theme: walking together in the truth of Christ and in love for one another.

s. 3 John

- Commendation of Gaius for his hospitality to John's representatives and notice of impending visit to deal with Diotrephes
- Theme: walking together in the truth of Christ.

t. Jude

- Encouragement by Jude, the brother of Jesus, to unnamed churches to fight for the apostolic faith against godless heretics.
- Theme: God's judgment on those who use his grace to promote sexual immorality and rejection of Christ's lordship.

H. REVELATION OF ST JOHN

1. Form

- a. It is an apocalypse with visions and words of prophecy (1:1-3; cf. 22:7,10,19).
- b. It communicates a vision of present events in the light of eternity and the end of world history (1:19).
- c. It is couched in the form of a letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor (1:4).

2. Circumstances

- a. The apostle (or elder?) John was in exile on the island of Patmos during the persecution of Domitian about 95 AD (1:1,4,9;22:8).
- b. The Roman authorities were enforcing the cult of emperor worship which contradicted the confession of Jesus as Lord (see mark of the beast in 13:16-18).
- c. John was told by the angel to write the contents of his visions to the seven churches which had been under his care in Asia Minor (1:10-12; 21:5).

3. Purpose

- To urge Christians to resist the demands for emperor worship
- To encourage them to remain faithful to Christ in persecution

4. Structure

- a. Prologue
 - Introduction to the letter: 1:1-7
 - ***The first word of God*** to John: 1:8
- b. Seven cycles of visions
 - (1) Scene 1: ***the church in the world***: 1:9-3:22
 - Introduction : the presence of the risen Lord with his seven churches (1:9-20)
 - Seven letters to seven churches (2:1-3:22)
 - (2) Scene 2: ***the suffering church***: 4:1-8:1
 - Introduction : presentation of the scroll to the Lamb (4:1-5:14)
 - The opening of the seven seals (6:1-8:1)
 - (3) Scene 3: ***the fate of the world***: 8:2-11:18

- Introduction: the hearing of the saints' prayers (8:2-6)
 - The sounding of the seven trumpets (8:7-11:18)
- (4) Scene 4: ***the hidden drama of human history***: 11:19-15:4
- Introduction : the opening of the heavenly sanctuary and the casting of Satan from heaven to earth (11:19-12:17)
 - Seven visions of the cosmic conflict and the victory of the saints over the beast (13:1-15:4)
- (5) Scene 5: ***the judgment of the world***: 15:5-16:21
- Introduction : the release of God's wrath from the heavenly sanctuary (15:5-16:1)
 - The seven bowls with the seven plagues of God (16:2-21)
- (6) Scene 6: ***the doom of the prostitute Babylon***: 17:1-19:10
- Introduction : the offer of the angel to show 'the prostitute' (17:1-2)
 - Seven words of judgment on Babylon (17:3-19:10)
- (7) Scene 7: ***the divine goal of world history***: 19:11-21:8
- The opening of heaven and the seven visions of the final victory (19:11 - 21:4)
 - ***The final words of God to John*** (21:5-8)
- (8) Concluding visions and words: 21:9-22:21
- The offer of the angel to show the bride (21:9)
 - Three visions of the bride and the lamb (21:10-22:5)
 - Final words of encouragement and blessing (22:6-21)

5. Main Themes

- The hidden rule of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus in his church over all creation by virtue of his triumph over all evil powers (1:4-5a, 17-18; 5:5-10; 11:15; 17:14)
- Christian worship as priestly participation in heavenly worship, together with the angels and all creation (1:5b-6, 10-16; see also 4:1-5:14; 7:9-17)
- Participation of Christians in Christ's victory and reign through faithfulness in their witness to him and their endurance in suffering (2:10-11,24-28; 3:21; see also 12:10-11; 14:12)
- The attack of Satan on the church (12:1-17)
- Promise of a new heaven and earth, after the destruction of all evil powers, with the participation of the church in Christ's glory as heavenly Jerusalem and the bride of Christ (19:1-9; 21:1-4,9-14,22-27; 22:1-5; see also 3:12; 22:17)

