

# Contents of Bible books



Introduction to Biblical Literature

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# Historical books

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## # 17 books

- Pentateuch
  - Pre-exile (before Babylonian conquest)
  - Post-exile (after return from Babylon)
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## # Genesis – book of beginnings

- Beginning of universe; beginning of human race; beginning of sin (how people preferred going their own way rather than doing God's will); beginning of the Jewish people

## # Key chapters

- Genesis 1-2 Creation
- Genesis 3 Sin / First promise of Redeemer
- Genesis 12 Abraham's call



## # Exodus — Liberation (the way out)

- Biggest event in Jewish history: deliverance from Egyptian slavery
- Turning group of slaves into a functioning nation
- Giving of the Ten Commandments and building of Tabernacle

## # Key chapter: 20 – The Ten Commandments

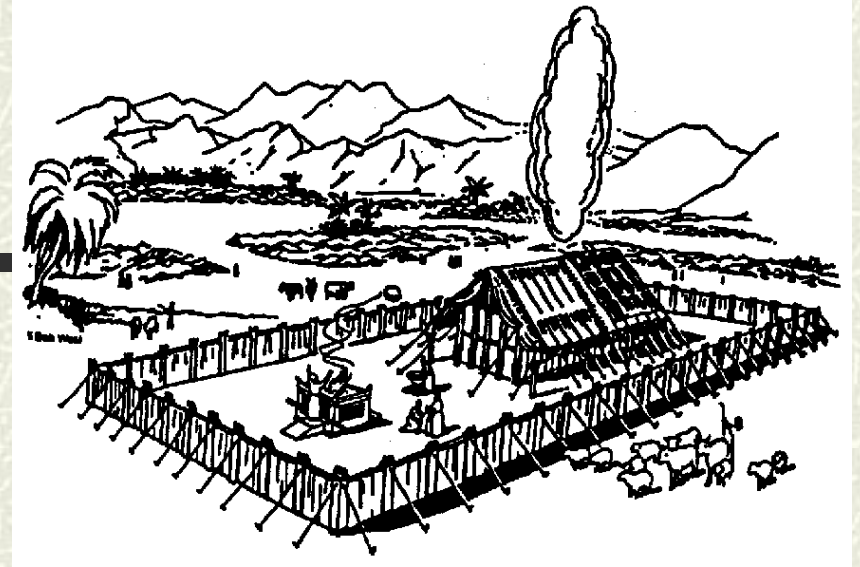
## Non Sequitur Wiley Miller

IT MIGHT LEAVE A LITTLE  
TOO MUCH ROOM FOR  
RATIONALIZATION.  
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY  
BREAKING IT DOWN TO  
A FEW SPECIFICS ...



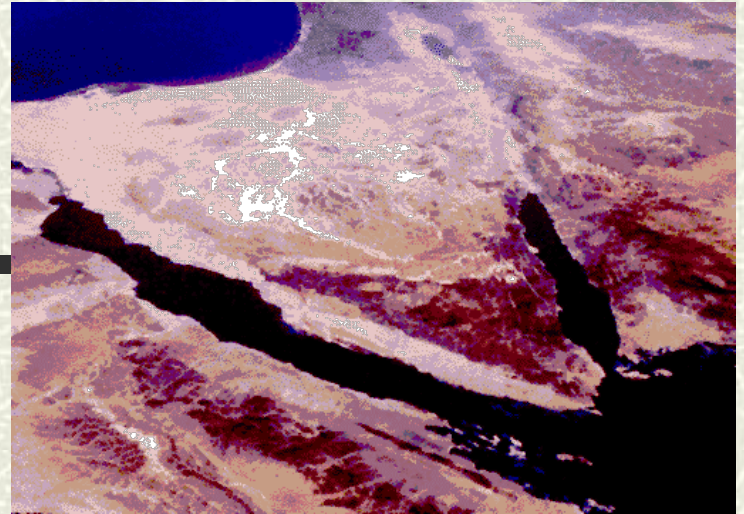
MOSES and the FIRST DRAFT





## # Leviticus

- The Levites (priests) and their service in the Tabernacle:
  - Instructions for 5 offerings and 8 feasts
- How may an unholy people approach a holy God?
- Key verse: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (19:18)



- # Numbers — (also called Book of the March)
  - Wilderness wanderings from Sinai to the border of Canaan -- a period of about 40 years



Deuteronomy

דְּבָרִים

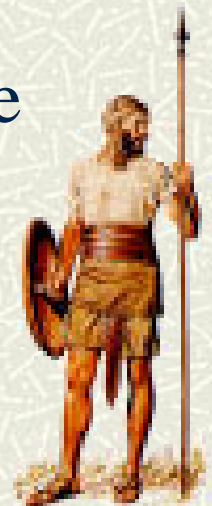
## # Deuteronomy — Moses' last messages and songs

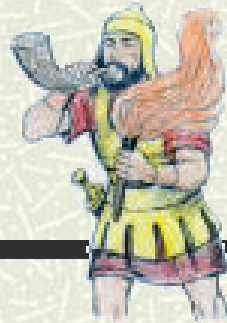
- Book of Remembrance: Moses looks back over a century crammed with epoch-creating events
- Deuteronomy means “second law”
- Source for Jesus' Great Commandment about loving God with all our heart, soul and body



## # Joshua —

- Conquest of the Promised Land / fall of Jericho and Ai
- Assigning portions of Promised Land to the tribal groups
- Key chapter:
  - Joshua 24: “line in the sand”





## # Judges — Israel's Dark Ages

- 350 years from Joshua's death to crowning of first king: Saul
- Key phrase: "Every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6)
- 15 judges (Gideon, Samson, Deborah)
- 7 apostasies, 7 servitudes, 7 deliverances



# Ruth — establishes family line of David  
(the Messiah's ancestor)

- No place for racial prejudice in God's Kingdom



## # I & II Samuel —

- From Samuel's childhood through Saul's troublesome times and on through the reign of David
- God's people come to a turning point as monarchy is set up





## Side note:

- Question: Why I & II Samuel, I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles?
  - Answer: When translated into Greek, the writings took up one third more space than they did in Hebrew. The parchment scrolls on which they were written were limited in length.



- # I & II Kings: 400 years of the growth and then the decay of the kingdom
  - Begin with King David and end with the king of Babylon.
  - Open with building the temple / end with burning the temple
  - Open with David's first successor the temple to the throne — Solomon — and end with David's last successor — Jehoiachin — released from captivity by the king of Babylon.
  - I Kings has the story of Elijah; II Kings centers around Elisha.

## # Material in Chronicles

- 1. Reign of Solomon
- 2. Division of Kingdom
  - About 850 B.C.
- 3. Parallel History of the Two Kingdoms
- 4. History of Judah to the Captivity
  - (from about 721 B.C. to 586 B.C.)



*"Ezra had set his heart to study  
the law of the LORD,  
and to do it, and  
to teach the statutes and  
ordinances in Israel."*

Ezra — Jewish  
restoration from  
Babylonian Captivity;  
50,000 Jews return  
from exile to their  
homeland and rebuild  
Jerusalem and the  
Temple

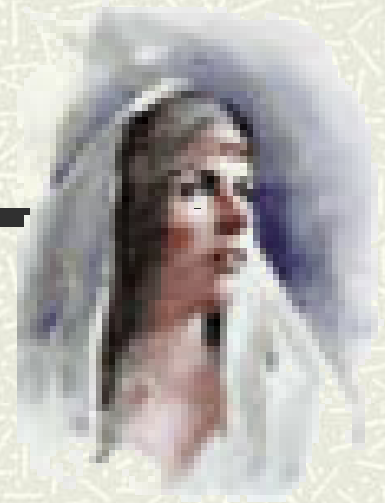


Photo of Cyrus' decree allowing temple to be rebuilt



# Nehemiah —  
Nehemiah as new  
governor rebuilds  
walls of Jerusalem





## # Esther — A plot to exterminate the Jews

- Divine deliverance of dispersed Jews who were destined to die; God in the shadows watches His own
- Key verse: “Perhaps you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this”

# Wisdom literature

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## # 5 writings from the heart



## # Job:

- Why do the righteous suffer?
- Job's 4 "friends" attempt to explain what has happened to him
- Key verse: Job 1:21-22





# Psalms

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- # Hebrew hymnal and book of prayers
  - # Key chapters
    - Psalm 23 – the shepherd’s psalm
    - Psalm 51 – David’s cry for forgiveness after his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba
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## # Proverbs

- A manual for everyday living; moral and ethical implications of every area of life
- Key verse: Proverbs 3:5-6
- Key chapter: Proverbs 31 – Ode to a wonderful wife



## # Ecclesiastes:

- There is no meaning in life and creation apart from God; skeptical
- Key verse: 2:11, 13; 12:13-14

## # Song of Solomon

- The sacredness and purity of human love (perhaps a parable of divine love).
- Key verse: 8:6-7



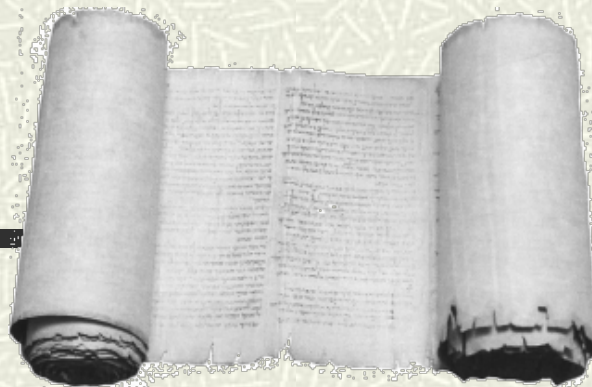


# Prophetic writings

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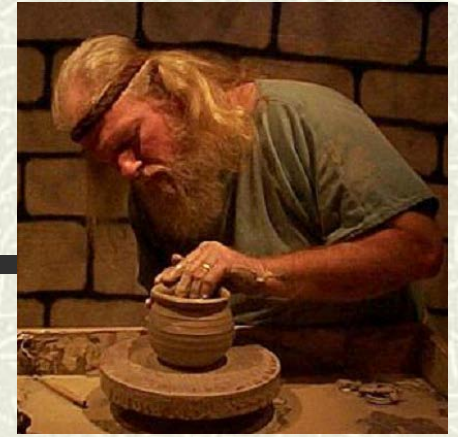
- # Two kinds of divisions:
  - Major / Minor
  - Pre-exile / post exile





## # Isaiah —

- More than any other Old Testament writing, looks forward to Messiah
- Passionate portrayal of God's righteousness and the necessity of faith
- Key chapter: 53 -- "Suffering servant"



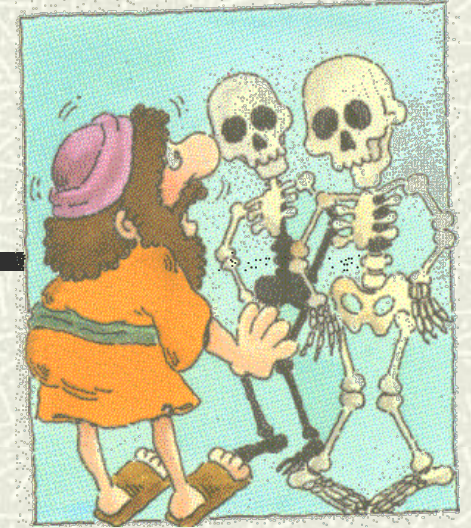
## # Jeremiah —

- The God who avenges sin
- Warns Judah that her sins will result in chastisement from the North (the Babylonians)
- God is going to make a new covenant with His people
- Uses lots of “object lessons”



## # Lamentations—

- A lamenting over Judah's sins and the subsequent destruction she suffered
- A sad cry for what has happened to God's people
- An appeal for repentance





## # Ezekiel —

- Foretells day when Israel will be reunited with her own king and will worship the one true God in the reconstructed temple.
- Strange visions
  - Wheel within a wheel 
  - Valley of dry bones 



## # Daniel —

- God's people are being persecuted
- Three Hebrew children in furnace
- Daniel in lions' den
- In the Last Days God will bring about a Kingdom that will never be destroyed



## Hosea

- An analogy of sin, forgiveness and grace built on Hosea's relationship with his unfaithful wife, Gomer
- Prophecy of Jesus, Mary and Joseph leaving Egypt and returning to Galilee





## # Joel— the prophet of Pentecost

- The Spirit poured out on humanity
- Invasion of crickets



# Amos — message to wealthy and religious leaders about their greed, selfishness, immorality, extortion, bribery and injustice

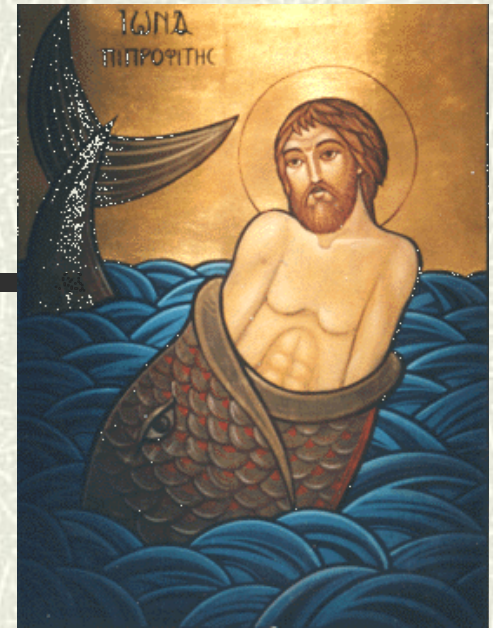




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## Obadiah —

- Shortest book in Old Testament
  - Coming Day of the Lord
  - Prophecy against Edom
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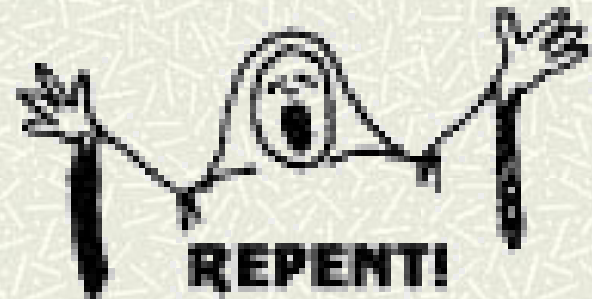


## # Jonah —

- Missionary book of Old Testament
- Let your heart be broken with what breaks God's heart

## # Micah —

- Prophecy of Bethlehem as Jesus' birthplace
- Impending judgment

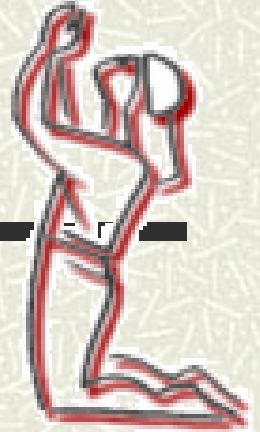




## # Nahum —

- Downfall of Nineveh and vindication of Judah
- God will punish arrogant and evil nations





## # Habakkuk —

- A prophet's questions and complaints and God's answers
- “The just shall live by faith” (2:4) which is quoted by Paul in his letter to the Romans



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# Zephaniah — coming day of the Lord;  
God's judgment on Judah; righteous  
remnant

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Haggai — Complete the Temple! “Is it right for you to live in luxurious homes when the Temple lies in ruins?”

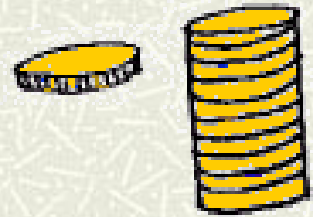


## # Zechariah —

- Visions reminiscent of John's Revelation
- Finish the Temple!
- Prophecies of the Messiah
  - The 30 pieces of silver
  - The piercing of Jesus' side with a spear
  - Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey

## # Malachi —

- Sin and apostasy of Israel
- Passage on tithing – no one is living and giving like God wants



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