Contents of Bible books

Introduction to Biblical Literature
Historical books

- 17 books
  - Pentateuch
  - Pre-exile (before Babylonian conquest)
  - Post-exile (after return from Babylon)
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
IT MIGHT LEAVE A LITTLE TOO MUCH ROOM FOR RATIONALIZATION. MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY BREAKING IT DOWN TO A FEW SPECIFICS...

DON'T DO BAD THINGS

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

"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."

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

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

- 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
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

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
Obadiah —

- Shortest book in Old Testament
- Coming Day of the Lord
- Prophecy against Edom
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
Zephaniah — coming day of the Lord; God's judgment on Judah; righteous remnant
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
This PowerPoint presentation is available along with related materials and other PowerPoint presentations at http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ppt.htm