

**Versailles Baptist Church
A Year in the Word
Daily Reading Discipleship Guide
Vol. 2: Job-John**



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for participating so far in the Year in the Word emphasis at Versailles Baptist Church. With this year-long sermon series, we have started a journey from Genesis to Revelation, examining key points of each book and gaining a greater knowledge of God's grand story. From the picture of the Passover in Exodus, to the kinsman redeemer in Ruth, to the cry for justice in Amos, all Scripture points to God's plan of redeeming mankind through His Son Jesus Christ.

Since there is no way we could cover an entire book of the Bible in just one sermon, this discipleship book will be an important companion for you. The daily readings and study will coordinate with Wednesday night Bible study and each Sunday's sermons so that you can come with a better understanding and application of the book being taught and preached.

We have divided this journey into eight segments that provide mini-series within the larger series. Volume 2 covers sections 3, 4 and 5 as we look at **Wisdom for Life** (Job-Song of Solomon), **Prophetic Voices** (Isaiah-Malachi) and **The King is Here** (Matthew-John).

Whether you are continuing from Volume 1, or you are starting new with this volume, we welcome you on this journey. Let's dedicate 2021 to be the **Year in the Word**.

Pastor Michael Cabell

A YEAR IN THE WORD OUTLINE

Volume II: Job to John – April 18 to August 15

WISDOM FOR LIFE

April 18	JOB
April 25	PSALMS
May 2	Donald Whitney*
May 9	PROVERBS/ECCLESIASTES
May 16	SONG OF SOLOMON

PROPHETIC VOICE

May 23	ISAIAH
May 30	JEREMIAH/LAMENTATIONS
June 6	EZEKIEL
June 13	DANIEL
June 20	HOSEA/JOEL/AMOS/OBADIAH
June 27	JONAH
July 4	MICAH/NAHUM
July 11	HABAKKUK
July 18	ZEPHANIAH/HAGGAI
	ZECHARIAH/MALACHI

THE KING IS HERE

July 25	MATTHEW
August 1	MARK
August 8	LUKE
August 15	JOHN

Looking Ahead...

Volume III: Acts to Revelation – August 22 to December 26

THE CHURCH IS SENT

LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD

THE KING IS COMING AGAIN

* Special guest speaker Dr. Donald Whitney is Professor of Biblical Spirituality and Associate Dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Whitney has authored nine books, including *Praying the Bible*, on which he will lead a seminar on the night of May 2.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

THE SEVEN ARROWS METHOD

By Matt Rogers and Donny Mathis

The Seven Arrows Bible Reading Method was developed by two pastors who sought to guide believers to read and study God's word in order to not only better understand it but to obey it. Asking seven simple questions can help you see the main point of a passage so it will translate into truth to live out. Here are the seven questions and descriptions of what they seek to help the reader answer.



ARROW 1 - What does this passage say?

The first step is to summarize the passage in your own words. Think about what would happen if you spent 30 minutes on the phone with your best friend. In that time, you would have talked about all sorts of things, but there are likely one or two big ideas that you focused on. Maybe you complained about today's test or maybe you talked about your plans for the weekend. If you were asked to describe the phone call later, you wouldn't describe every detail of the call. You might say, "We talked about how difficult today's Spanish test was." You should be able to do the same thing with any passage of Scripture— simply read the passage and put the main point in your own words. You might say something like, "Jesus said that people who are really great in this world are those who serve others" or "Paul said that all people sin and disobey God."



ARROW 2 – What did this passage mean to its original audience?

Long before we can apply the Bible to our lives, we have to ask what the passage meant to those who experienced the stories of the Bible firsthand. It's easy to get bogged down on this question and think that you have to be an expert on the people and places of the Bible in order to answer it, but that's not necessarily the case. You might find it helpful to read the introduction to the book of Scripture you are reading or take a look at some study notes in your Bible, but you can often answer this question just by putting yourself in the scene and asking what you'd imagine those in the story would have thought or felt. For example, you might read about Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well in John 4 and conclude that she would have been embarrassed by her sin, but also amazed that Jesus showed love and compassion to her anyway.



ARROW 3 - What does this passage tell us about God?

The Bible is about God, so it's wise to ask ourselves what we learn about Him when we read each passage. This question is important because it protects us from making ourselves the main character in the Bible. It's easy to read the Bible as if it's actually about us—our problems, our struggles, our needs. But that's not the case. The Bible is about God and His story, and it's an honor that He would include us. There will be times when the Bible just comes right out and tells us something about God. We might read that God is gracious, compassionate, or faithful. Other times, it may not be as clear, and we have to think about the story and consider how God's character is seen. Also, sometimes Scripture will refer to God the Father, but other times we learn something about Jesus or the Holy Spirit.



ARROW 4 - What does this passage tell us about man?

Once you've asked the first three questions, it's time to turn the attention to your own life by asking what you learn about yourself from the passage you read. This question will likely be one of the easiest for you to answer because you know yourself well. Since the Bible is the story of God's work to save sinners like you, then you will see people who sin (like you do) and need Jesus (like you do) throughout the stories you read.



ARROW 5 - What does this passage demand of me?

The final three arrows are action-oriented. They ask you to do something based on the truth you've discovered in arrows one through four. You will find that some passages make the application clearer than others. In many of Paul's letters, he comes right out and tells you what you should do: live a life of love, don't grumble or complain, and the list goes on and on. Other times you'll have to reflect on the passage you've read and consider the application based on your answers to the first four questions. One word of caution: This application is not always a physical action. For example, you might find that some application will focus on your thoughts more than your actions—things like trust God or don't worry. This may not seem like an action, but these steps of obedience are just as important as other more easily observed actions.



ARROW 6 - How does this passage change the way I relate to people?

Arrow six forces a specific type of application—one that challenges you to apply the Bible to the various relationships in your life. You might think of it this way—the Bible pushes us toward two types of application, vertical and horizontal. Vertical application is primarily directed toward God—things like prayer, trust, and faith. Horizontal application is directed toward other people. This arrow calls us to consider

how the passage would have us love the people God has put in our lives. Maybe it's sharing the gospel with a friend who doesn't know Jesus. Maybe it's apologizing to someone we've hurt or serving someone in need. Combined, arrows five and six help us to obey both aspects of one of the greatest commandments as we seek to love God and love others.



ARROW 7 - What does this passage prompt me to pray to God about?

The final arrow in our Bible reading process invites us to talk to God about what we've read. Prayer should be a response to God for the ways He has spoken to us through His Word. It's the same way we would interact with a friend who sent us a text. We would read what our friend said, and then reply with our own message. Relationships require interaction and communication, and the same is true of our relationship with God. We listen to Him speak to us through His Word, and then we respond back to Him in prayer. Prayer based on the Bible allows us to ask specifically and intentionally for those things God has shown us in His Word, rather than merely praying for whatever comes to our mind in the moment.

So that's it, just seven simple arrows. But hopefully these cues will assist us in interacting with Scripture and with our God as He transforms our lives into the likeness of Christ. On the next page is given an example of using the seven arrows to interact with Scripture.

Example Passage with the Seven Arrow Questions:

Psalm 19:7-11 (Notice that the answers aren't lengthy, but to the point.)



ARROW 1 - What does the passage say?

God's Word is a treasure that is meant to explain God's truth and guide my life.



ARROW 2 - What did the passage mean to its original audience?

The Israelites had learned many painful lessons because of their failure to obey God's Word, so they would have understood the truth of this passage.



ARROW 3 - What does the passage tell us about God?

God is gracious and gives His people the gift of His Word to protect them from harm.



ARROW 4 - What does the passage tell us about man?

I need to be warned and led by God's Word, because I am often tempted to disobey God and do whatever I want.



ARROW 5 - What does the passage demand of me?

Rather than thinking about reading the Bible as a task to complete, I should thank God for the gift of His Word and learn to treasure its wisdom.



ARROW 6 - How does this passage change the way I relate to people?

I can learn to know, understand, and obey God's Word, so that I can share its truth with my friends and point them to God's plans and purposes for life.



ARROW 7 - What does this passage prompt me to pray to God about?

God, I thank You for Your Word. I pray that You would help me learn to love Your Word over the course of this year, so that I can know You better and love You more.



WISDOM FOR LIFE

JOB - SONG OF SOLOMON

JOB

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

18

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

42

TYPE

WISDOM/POETRY



OVERVIEW

This book records the story of Job, a righteous man who responds with faith to difficult trials in his life, including the loss of his children, property, and eventually his own health.



WRITTEN

About 1900 BC



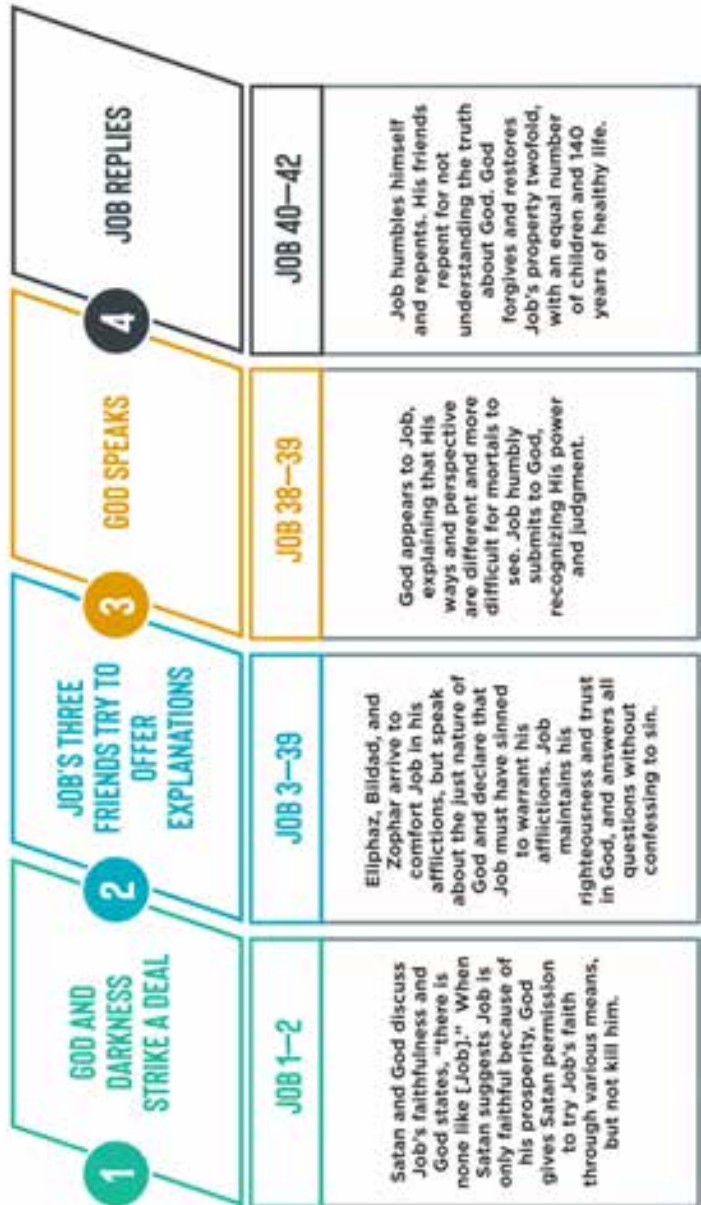
TIME PERIOD COVERED

2100–1900 BC



AUTHOR

Unknown



* For an additional introduction to the book of Job, see page 147.

WEEK 15 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, APR 12

Job 1:1-2:10 (Testing of Job)



WEEK 15

DAY 2 – TUE, APR 13

Job 2:11-3:26 (Job's pain)



WEEK 15
DAY 3 – WED, APR 14

Job 15:1-13; 16:1-5; 18:1-4; 19:1-6 (Job's friends' inaccurate accusations)



WEEK 15

DAY 4 – THU, APR 15

Job 38:1-40:9 (The Lord speaks to Job)



WEEK 15
DAY 5 – FRI, APR 16

Job 42:1-16 (Job is restored)



“Wisdom for the Hurting”

PSALMS

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT


19

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS


150

TYPE


WISDOM/POETRY

OVERVIEW


Initially written as poetry to be set to music, the Book of Psalms is often considered the first hymnal. All psalms express emotions to or about God. The psalms were collected over 1,000 years by various scribes from 1400 BC to around 450 BC. They are organized somewhat chronologically.

WRITTEN

1400–450 BC

TIME PERIOD COVERED

Meant to be timeless

AUTHOR

Multiple contributors; King David wrote 73 psalms

1

THE 73 PSALMS
BY KING DAVID

2

THE 12 PSALMS
WRITTEN BY
ASAPH AND
FAMILY MEMBERS

3

THE 11 PSALMS
WRITTEN BY THE
SONS OF KORAH

4

SMALLER
CONTRIBUTIONS

5

REMAINING
PSALMS

3–9; 11–32; 34–41;
51–65; 68–70; 86;
101; 103; 108–110; 122;
124; 131; 133; 138–145.

50; 73–83.

42; 44–49; 84–85;
87–88.

Heman, Psalm 89;
Solomon, Psalms 72
and 127; Moses, Psalm
90; Ethan the Ezrahite,
Psalm 89.

All other psalms are
anonymous.

* For an additional introduction to the book of Psalms, see page 147.

WEEK 16 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, APR 19

Psalms 1 & 19



WEEK 16
DAY 2 – TUE, APR 20

2 Samuel 12:1-15; Psalms 51; Psalms 32; Psalms 103



WEEK 16
DAY 3 – WED, APR 21

Psalms 119



WEEK 16
DAY 4 – THU, APR 22

Psalms 73 & 103



WEEK 16
DAY 5 – FRI, APR 23

Psalms 148-150



“Wisdom for the Believer”

PROVERBS

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

TYPE

20

31

WISDOM/POETRY


OVERVIEW

Primarily written by Solomon, the Proverbs speaks truth about life, human nature, and consequences of righteous and wicked behavior. Unlike the Book of Psalms which was compiled chronologically, Proverbs is compiled by format and theme.


WRITTEN
 970-475 BC


TIME PERIOD COVERED
 Like Psalms, Proverbs was compiled over centuries and is meant to be timeless.


AUTHOR
 Solomon, with other contributors



* For an additional introduction to the book of Proverbs, see page 147.

WEEK 17 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, APR 26

Proverbs 1-3



WEEK 17
DAY 2 – TUE, APR 27

Proverbs 3



WEEK 17
DAY 3 – WED, APR 28

Proverbs 5 & 6:20-35



WEEK 17
DAY 4 – THU, APR 29

PROVERBS 18 & 22:1-16



WEEK 17
DAY 5 – FRI, APR 30

PROVERBS 31



SERMON NOTES

MAY 2

“Reading the Bible”
Dr. Donald Whitney

ECCLESIASTES

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

21

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

12

TYPE

WISDOM/POETRY



OVERVIEW

The book contains the thoughts and wisdom of King Solomon, but in a different writing style which departs from the short rhyming verses in Proverbs. He shares his musing on the purpose of life, the impermanence of worldly possessions, and the eternal nature of God and His commandments. While not extremely joyful, it may be comforting to those living with depression, confusion, or any unresolved issues.



WRITTEN
940–931 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
The book is meant for all generations, being timeless.



AUTHOR
Solomon, son of King David



* For an additional introduction to the book of Ecclesiastes, see page 147.

WEEK 18 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, MAY 3

Ecclesiastes 1 & 2



WEEK 18
DAY 2 – TUE, MAY 4

Ecclesiastes 3 & 4



WEEK 18
DAY 3 – WED, MAY 5

Ecclesiastes 5 & 6



WEEK 18
DAY 4 – THU, MAY 6

Ecclesiastes 7-9



WEEK 18
DAY 5 – FRI, MAY 7

Ecclesiastes 10-12



“Wisdom for the Successful”

SONG OF SOLOMON

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

22

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

8

TYPE

WISDOM/POETRY



OVERVIEW

Written by Solomon, this book contains words and poetry that complement the Bible's teachings about love and sexual sin. Solomon's writings serve as a reminder that romantic passion can be a great gift, and many sections can be used as an interpretation of Christ's love for His Church.



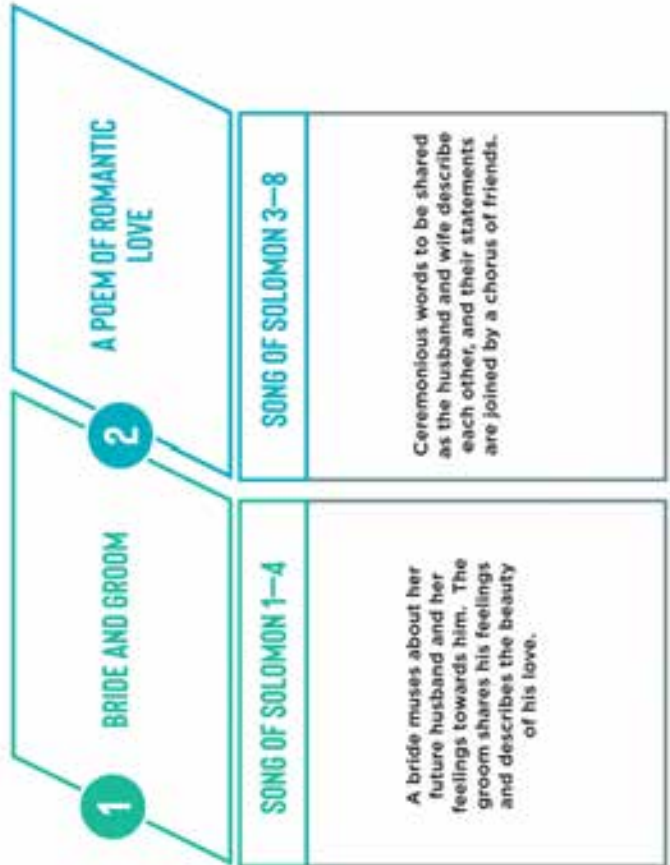
WRITTEN
970-950 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
Heard to be timeless



AUTHOR
King Solomon



* For an additional introduction to the book of Song of Solomon, see page 148.

WEEK 19 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, MAY 10

Song of Solomon 1



WEEK 19
DAY 2 – TUE, MAY 11

Song of Solomon 2 & 3



WEEK 19
DAY 3 – WED, MAY 12

Song of Solomon 4



WEEK 19
DAY 4 – THU, MAY 13

Song of Solomon 5 & 6



WEEK 19
DAY 5 – FRI, MAY 14

Song of Solomon 7 & 8



SONG OF SOLOMON SERMON NOTES

MAY 16

“Wisdom for the Married”

A PROPHETIC VOICE

ISAIAH - MALACHI



ISAIAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT


23

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

66


TYPE


PROPHECY




OVERVIEW

Isaiah was a prophet who served under four Judean kings. It is likely he met his death as a martyr under the evil King Manasseh, being sawed in half. His prophecies contain events concerning his day as well as the future, and foretell Jesus Christ. Isaiah's writings focus on the consequence of those who have turned their backs on the Lord and the restoration of Israel. Although later prophets quote Isaiah frequently, his writings may be often difficult to understand due to the use of symbolism and literary style.


WRITTEN
 700-680 BC


TIME PERIOD COVERED
 700 BC-25 AD (some prophecies span the life of Christ)


AUTHOR
 Isaiah the Prophet

1

THE SINS OF THE KINGDOMS

2

THE RESTORATION OF JUDAH AFTER THE EXILE

3

NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH

ISAIAH 1-39	ISAIAH 40-55	ISAIAH 56-66
Isaiah is called by God to teach repentance to the people. He announces the sins of both the southern and northern kingdoms, as well as neighboring countries, and consequences if they don't repent. Isaiah prophesies of Jesus Christ being born of a virgin.	Isaiah prophesies about the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylon prevailing over Israel. He also prophesies of the Exile and the restoration, which would happen in the next 100 years. Isaiah continues prophesying of Jesus Christ, including His suffering and death on the cross.	Isaiah writes of the new heavens and new earth with some beautiful and hopeful passages. He proclaims hope for the afflicted and judgment for the evil.

* For an additional introduction to the book of Isaiah, see page 148.

WEEK 20 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, MAY 17

Isaiah 6



WEEK 20
DAY 2 – TUE, MAY 18

Isaiah 1 & 9:8-21



WEEK 20
DAY 3 – WED, MAY 19

Isaiah 44:24-45:13



WEEK 20

DAY 4 – THU, MAY 20

Isaiah 9:1-7; 52:13-53:12; 1 Peter 2:21-25



WEEK 20
DAY 5 – FRI, MAY 21

Isaiah 65 & 66



JEREMIAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

24

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

52

TYPE

PROPHECY



OVERVIEW

Jeremiah is one of the few prophets who warned the people of impending disaster and was able to experience the events as they unfolded. For over 40 years, Jeremiah found himself addressing a nation who refused to change its ways despite many warnings, and as a result found itself facing judgment from God.



WRITTEN
645–570 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
575 BC–25 AD



AUTHOR
The Prophet
Jeremiah



* For an additional introduction to the book of Jeremiah, see page 148.

LAMENTATIONS

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

25

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

5

TYPE

PROPHECY



OVERVIEW

Written by Jeremiah, the Book of Lamentations shares his sorrow at the destruction of Jerusalem and the wickedness of the people. Having warned and prophesied of the event for over 40 years, Jeremiah grieves Judah's ruin and captivity. He writes a series of poems expressing both God's view and his own feelings, which are closely aligned.



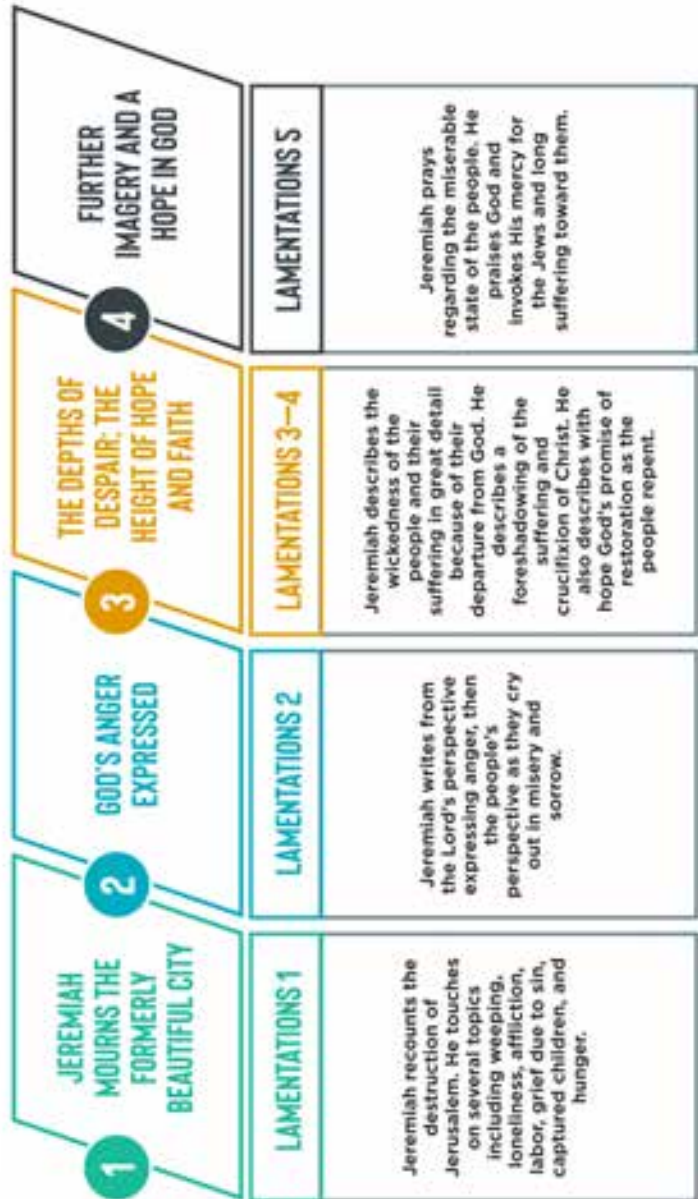
WRITTEN
585 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
586-585 BC



AUTHOR
The Prophet
Jeremiah



* For an additional introduction to the book of Lamentations, see page 148.

WEEK 21 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, MAY 24

Jeremiah 1-2:13; 2:35-37



WEEK 21
DAY 2 – TUE, MAY 25

Jeremiah 4:19-21; 8:18-9:3



WEEK 21
DAY 3 – WED, MAY 26

Jeremiah 25:1-29; 29:1-19



WEEK 21
DAY 4 – THU, MAY 27

Jeremiah 33



WEEK 21
DAY 5 – FRI, MAY 28

Lamentations 2 & 5



EZEKIEL

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

26

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

48

TYPE

PROPHECY



OVERVIEW

Ezekiel was a priest and one of those carried away in captivity. He prophesies from captivity for a period of over 20 years. His prophecies cover a range of topics and history, and include God's explanation of current wrath, the recent reformation of Israel, and the Millennial Kingdom.



WRITTEN
590-570 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
585 BC through the end
of times



AUTHOR
The Prophet
Ezekiel



* For an additional introduction to the book of Ezekiel, see page 149.

WEEK 22 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, MAY 31

Ezekiel 1:1-3; 2 & 3



WEEK 22
DAY 2 – TUE, JUN 1

Ezekiel 15



WEEK 22
DAY 3 – WED, JUN 2

Ezekiel 25



WEEK 22
DAY 4 – THU, JUN 3

Ezekiel 36:16-38



WEEK 22
DAY 5 – FRI, JUN 4

Ezekiel 37



DANIEL

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

27

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

12

TYPE

PROPHECY

Daniel was one of the victims of the exile, carried away into Babylon. In captivity, Daniel was trained for service in the king's household, and found favor there. The first part of the book contains Daniel's narratives wherein he chose to keep the Lord's law and was blessed in many ways, gaining favor and power in the kingdom. The second part contains Daniel's prophetic visions, which are like Ezekiel's in their depth and clarity, and covering especially the end times.



AUTHOR

Daniel the Prophet



TIME PERIOD COVERED

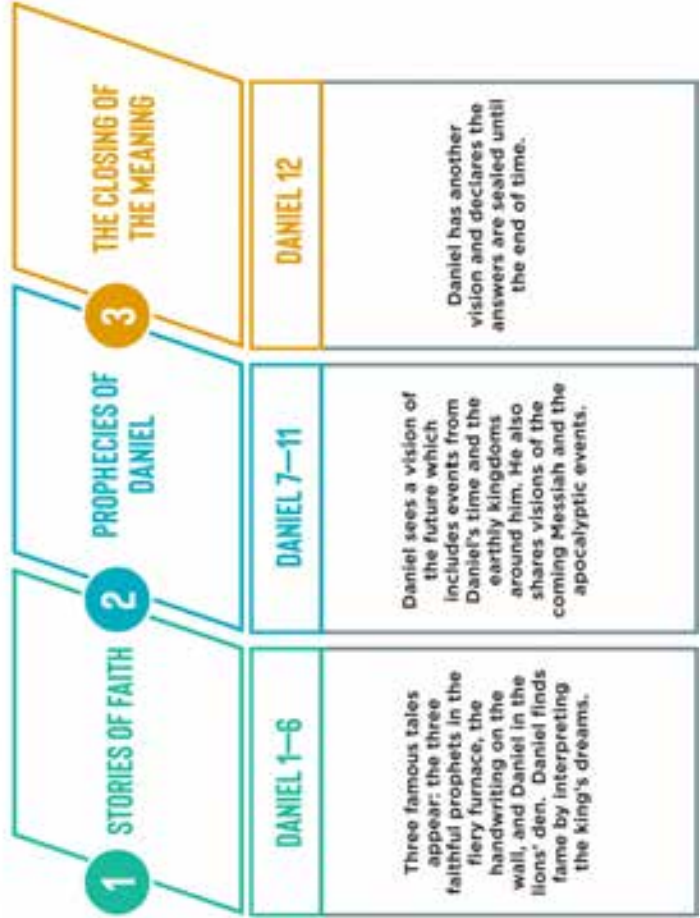
530 BC to End of Time



WRITTEN

538–530 BC

OVERVIEW



* For an additional introduction to the book of Daniel, see page 149.

WEEK 23 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, JUN 7

Daniel 1



WEEK 23
DAY 2 – TUE, JUN 8

Daniel 2



WEEK 23
DAY 3 – WED, JUN 9

Daniel 3



WEEK 23
DAY 4 – JUN 10

Daniel 6




WEEK 23
DAY 5 – FRI, JUN 11

Daniel 11




HOSEA


ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT	28	NUMBER OF CHAPTERS	14	TYPE	PROPHECY, MINOR
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OVERVIEW

Hosea was the only prophet from the northern kingdom of Israel to have a written record. The Lord commanded Hosea to marry a harlot, and God used this as a symbol of His relationship with His covenant people. This fueled the prophet to understand God's feelings about Israel's unfaithfulness and His promise of redemption.


WRITTEN
750-710 BC


TIME PERIOD COVERED
750-6 BC


AUTHOR
Hosea the Prophet

1 MARRIAGE TO AN ADULTEROUS WOMAN	2 GOD SPEAKS TO ISRAEL AND JUDAH	3 ASSYRIA NAMED AS ASSAILANT	4 WARNING TO EPHRAIM
HOSEA 1-3	HOSEA 4-7	HOSEA 8-11	HOSEA 12-14
God asks Hosea to marry the adulterous woman Gomer, then guides him to redeem and forgive her.	Hosea outlines the charges against Israel from lying to murder. Specifically, he emphasizes the sins of Ephraim, Samaria, and Judah for legalism instead of love.	Hosea prophesies of the approaching Assyrian invasion. Hosea gives vivid detail of sins and judgment, and finally names Assyria as the impending attacker.	Hosea warns Ephraim against focusing on politics and other nations instead of worshipping and listening for God. He then reminds the people to repent.

* For an additional introduction to the book of Hosea, see page 149.

JOEL

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

29

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

3

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

Joel was a prophet of Judah who foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and other events, futuristic by today's standards. The book speaks to all generations, encouraging all to be ready for the "Day of the Lord." Terms like "the latter rain" and "approaching darkness" come from its texts, which are used by Christians to describe current and near-future trends.



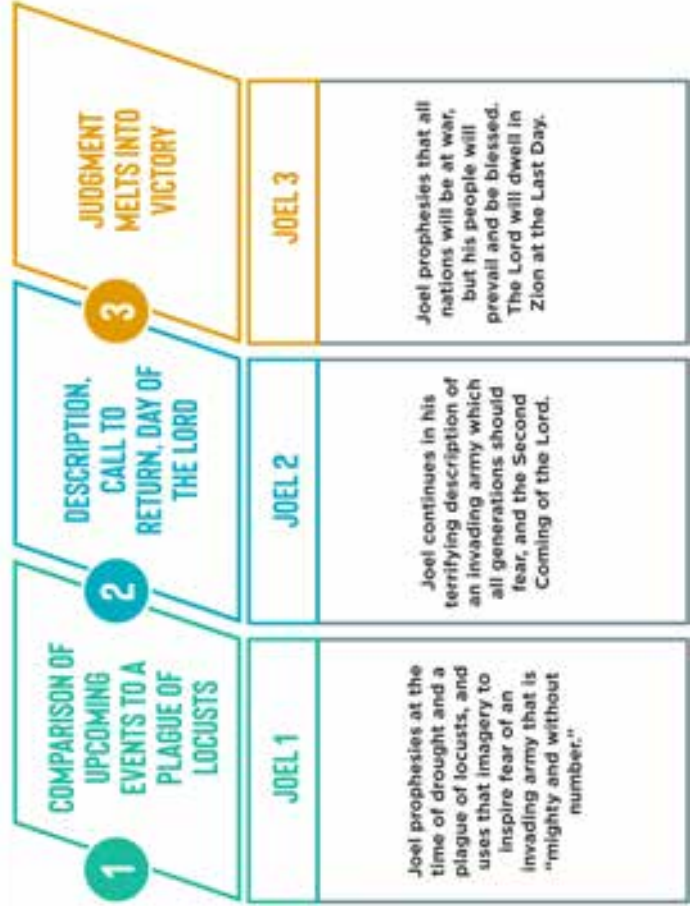
WRITTEN
800, date unknown



TIME PERIOD COVERED
Unknown; sometimes between 835-430 BC



AUTHOR
The Prophet Joel



* For an additional introduction to the book of Joel, see page 149.

AMOS

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

TYPE

30

9

PROPHECY, MINOR


OVERVIEW

Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town 10 miles south of Jerusalem. This was unusual, as most prophets did not have previous occupations. Amos predicted the overthrow of the Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, which happened in 722 BC. He also predicted the doom of Judah and many surrounding nations.


WRITTEN
750 BC


TIME PERIOD COVERED
722–516 BC


AUTHOR
The Prophet Amos



* For an additional introduction to the book of Amos, see page 150.

OBADIAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT	NUMBER OF CHAPTERS	TYPE
31	1	PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

Obadiah's name means "worshipper of Yahweh" and his writings are one of the few instances where God speaks solely to another culture rather than Israel. At the time, the people of Edom were mocking and harassing God's people, and Obadiah prophesies to them and warns them of their impending punishment.



WRITTEN

There isn't enough evidence to pin down an exact time, but historians say it is most likely circa 840 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED

During this time, Judah was very vulnerable to invasion. It had been attacked by the Philistines and also by the Arabians. Edom may never have invaded, but they rejoiced when others would do so.



AUTHOR

Obadiah

1

EDOM'S PRIDE PUNISHED

OBADIAH 1

Obadiah prophesies that God will punish Edom for gloating over God's people while they suffered. Obadiah teaches that we are mocking God when we gloat over suffering of others.

* For an additional introduction to the book of Obadiah, see page 150.

WEEK 24 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, JUN 14

Hosea 1:1-2:13



WEEK 24
DAY 2 – TUE, JUN 15

Hosea 2:14-3:5



WEEK 24
DAY 3 – WED, JUN 16

Joel 1-3



WEEK 24

DAY 4 – THU, JUN 17

Amos 1:1-2; 2:4-16; 9:11-15



WEEK 24
DAY 5 – FRI, JUN 18

Obadiah



**HOSEA/JOEL/AMOS/OBADIAH
SERMON NOTES**

June 20

JONAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

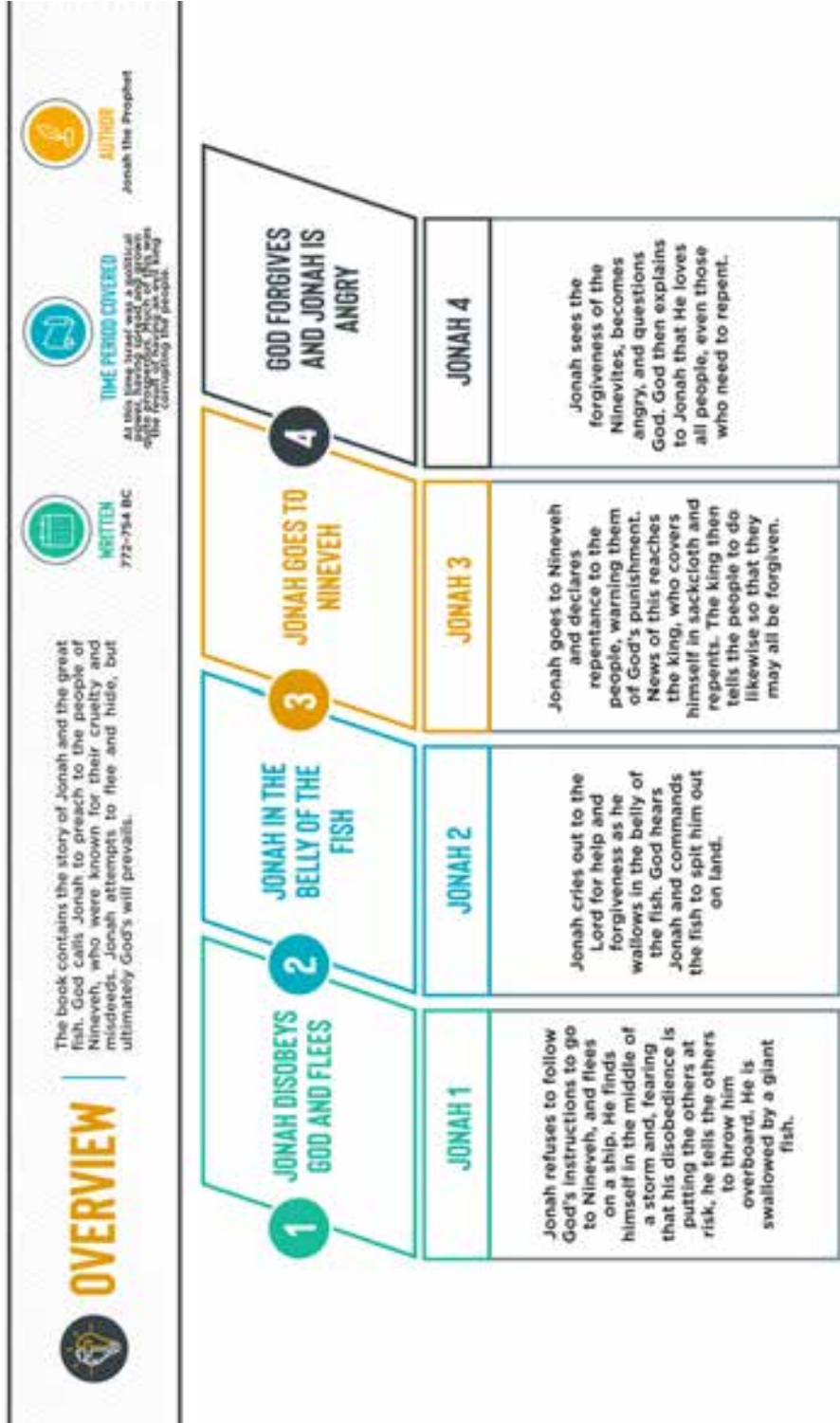
32

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

4

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



* For an additional introduction to the book of Jonah, see page 150.

WEEK 25 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, JUN 21

Jonah 1



WEEK 25
DAY 2 – TUE, JUN 22

Jonah 2



WEEK 25
DAY 3 – WED, JUN 23

Jonah 3



WEEK 25
DAY 4 – THU, JUN 24

Jonah 4



WEEK 25
DAY 5 – FRI, JUN 25

Matthew 12:38-42; 17:22



MICAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

33

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

7

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR

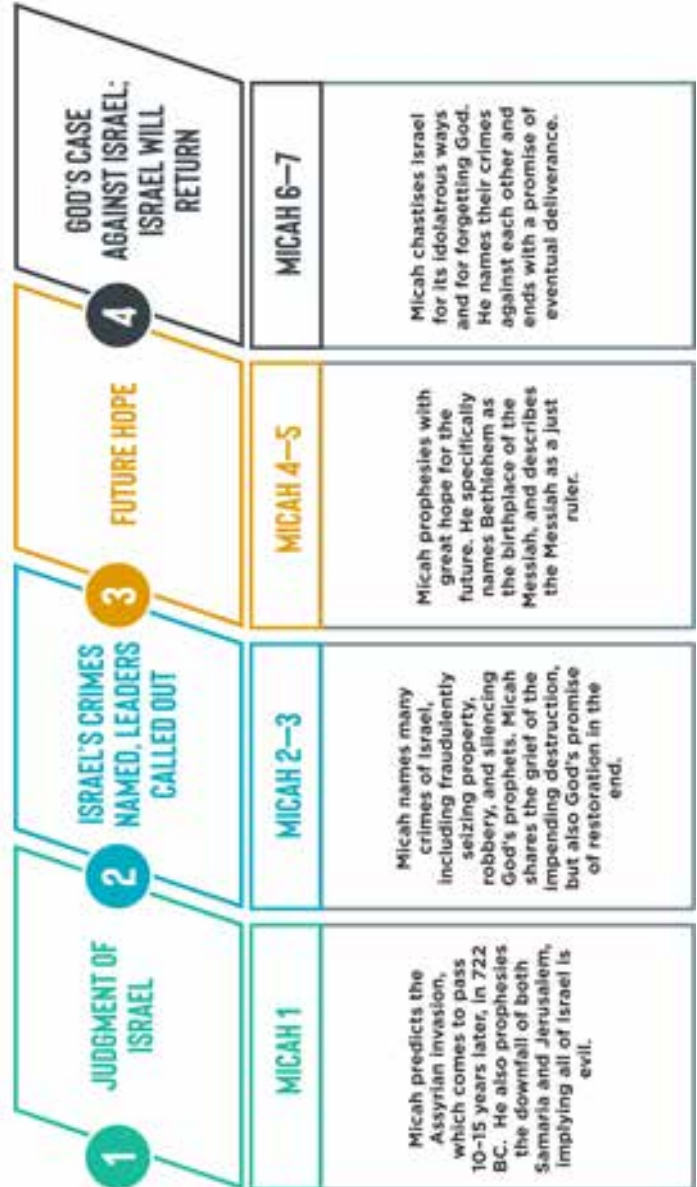

OVERVIEW

Micah prophesied at the same time as Isaiah and Hosea, during the tragic years surrounding the Assyrian invasion of Israel. Micah's earlier prophecies concern judgment of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah for idolatry. His later prophecies concern the future kingdom Jesus speaks of during His ministry.


WRITTEN
 735-710 BC


TIME PERIOD COVERED
 722 BC to the End of Days


AUTHOR
 The Prophet Micah



* For an additional introduction to the book of Micah, see page 150.

NAHUM

**OVERVIEW**

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

34

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

3

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR

Nahum means "comfort," and God sends him to prophesy during one of the darkest periods in Judah's history, when King Manasseh was allowing the worst of idolatry. Nahum fixates on the fall of the Assyrian city Nineveh, to whom the prophet Jonah had preached repentance some 150 years earlier. This time, the people do not repent and the prophecies of Nahum predicting the city's destruction come to pass in 612 B.C.

**WRITTEN**
450 B.C.

**TIME PERIOD COVERED**
658–615 B.C.

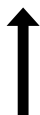
**AUTHOR**
Nahum the Prophet



* For an additional introduction to the book of Nahum, see page 151.

WEEK 26 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, JUN 28

Micah 1



WEEK 26
DAY 2 – TUE, JUN 29

Micah 4



WEEK 26
DAY 3 – WED, JUN 30

Micah 6:1-8



WEEK 26
DAY 4 – THU, JUL 1

Nahum 1



WEEK 26
DAY 5 – FRI, JUL 2

Nahum 2 & 3



HABAKKUK

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

35

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

3

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR

OVERVIEW

Habakkuk was a prophet. This book contains an exchange between him and the Lord when Habakkuk is frustrated with the wickedness of the people. This book teaches us that even when we feel like God is doing nothing, He is always with His people and will eventually prevail.

WRITTEN
 Around 604 BC

TIME PERIOD COVERED
 613-605 BC

AUTHOR
 Habakkuk the Prophet

1

HABAKKUK ASKS GOD FOR JUSTICE

2

GOD RESPONDS TO HABAKKUK

3

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

HABAKKUK 1	HABAKKUK 2	HABAKKUK 3
Habakkuk complains to God, asking why evil-doing is ignored and why God has been so silent. God explains that Babylon will invade Judah and that this will be a punishment for the wicked behavior of His people.	God uses various examples of treachery and pride to describe the reason for His anger. He explains how all of this will result in pain and shame for those who have been haughty and disobedient.	Habakkuk praises God and declares all of the great things the Lord has done.

* For an additional introduction to the book of Habakkuk, see page 151.

WEEK 27 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, JUL 5

Habakkuk 1:1-11



WEEK 27
DAY 2 – TUE, JUL 6

Habakkuk 1:12-2:5



WEEK 27
DAY 3 – WED, JUL 7

Habakkuk 2:6-20



WEEK 27
DAY 4 – THU, JUL 8

Habakkuk 3:1-15



WEEK 27
DAY 5 – FRI, JUL 9

Habakkuk 3:16-19



ZEPHANIAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

36

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

3

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

Zephaniah is known for his seven mentions of "the Day of the Lord," more mentions than any other prophet. Often, the term refers to the end of time, but can mean any time in history where God personally intervenes to protect His people. Zephaniah has immediate importance for the people, as well as future generations.



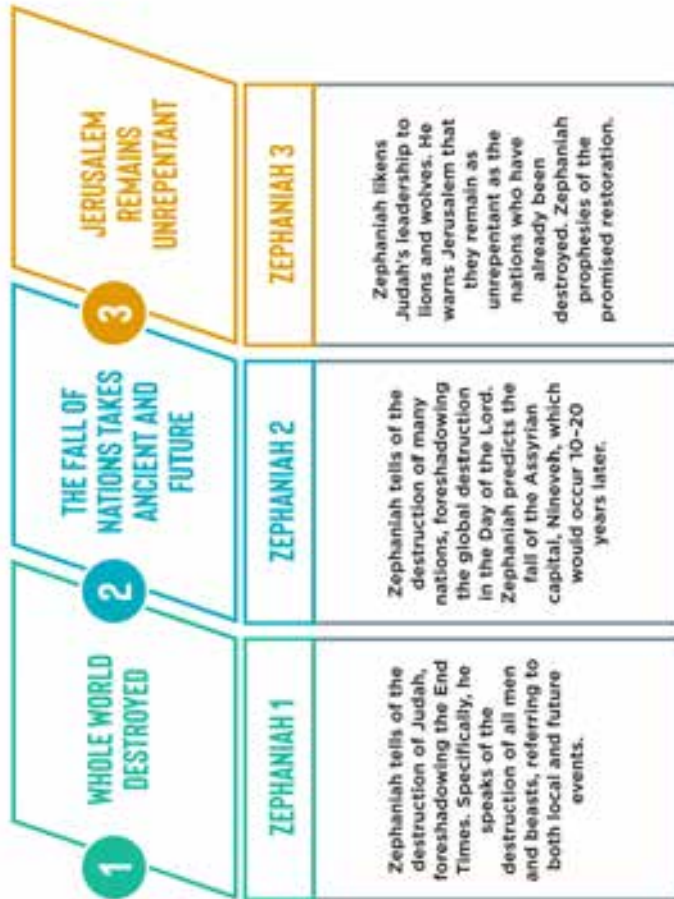
WRITTEN
633-625 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
608 BC to the End of Days



AUTHOR
The Prophet Zephaniah



* For an additional introduction to the book of Zephaniah, see page 151.

HAGGAI

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

37

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

2

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

One of the few books written after the return from the Great Exile in Babylon, Haggai wrote to encourage the people of Judah to rebuild the Temple. He wanted them to stop focusing on their own misfortune and to remember that devotion to God brings true rewards.



WRITTEN
520 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
520 BC



AUTHOR
Haggai the Prophet



* For an additional introduction to the book of Haggai, see page 151.

ZECHARIAH

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

38

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

14

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

Zechariah prophesies after the return from the Great Exile. The scope of his prophecies covers wide ranges of topics and timelines, as he often speaks of Old Testament events and the First and Second Coming of Christ in the same passage. There is a lull of decades between his two sets of prophecies.



WRITTEN
520–484 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
520 BC–End of Days



AUTHOR
The Prophet
Zechariah



* For an additional introduction to the book of Zechariah, see page 152.

MALACHI

ORDER IN OLD TESTAMENT

39

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

4

TYPE

PROPHECY, MINOR



OVERVIEW

The people of Judah had been living in Jerusalem for more than 100 years after the Babylonian exile. Although the Temple had been rebuilt, there was corruption in the priesthood and the people had become spiritually disinterested. Through Malachi, God calls the priests and people to repentance.



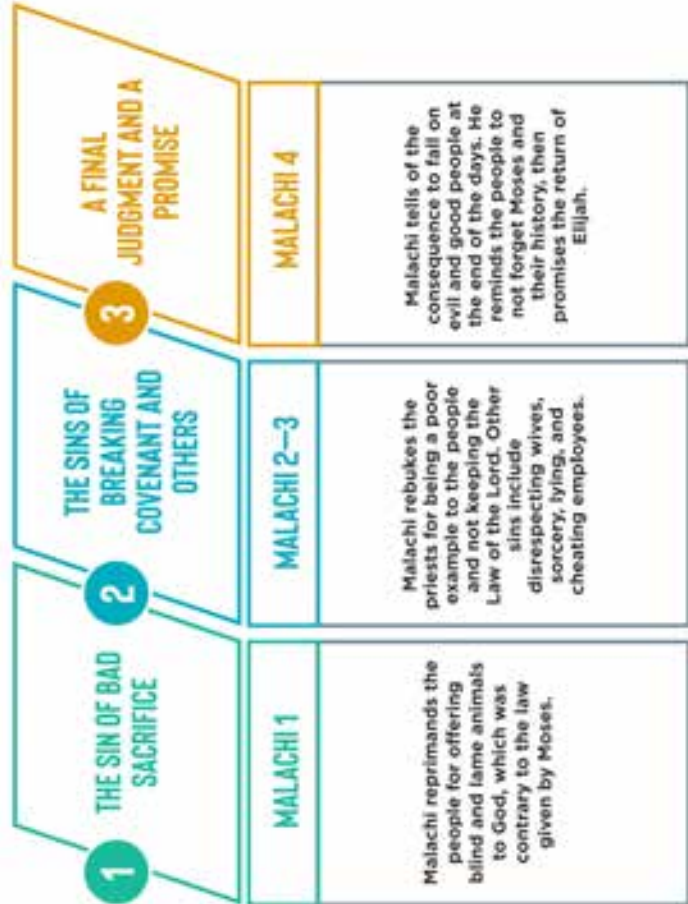
WRITTEN
433–424 BC



TIME PERIOD COVERED
424 BC–24 AD



AUTHOR
Malachi the Prophet



* For an additional introduction to the book of Malachi, see page 152.

WEEK 28 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, JUL 12

Zephaniah 2



WEEK 28
DAY 2 – TUE, JUL 13

Haggai 1 & 2



WEEK 28
DAY 3 – WED, JUL 14

Zechariah 1:1-6; 9



WEEK 28

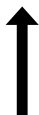
DAY 4 – THU, JUL 15

Zechariah 12 & 13; John 19:31-37



WEEK 28
DAY 5 – FRI, JUL 16

Malachi 3 & 4; Matthew 11:10-14



**ZEPHANIAH/HAGGAI/ZECHARIAH/MALACHI
SERMON NOTES**

July 18



The New Testament

We have just completed an overview of the Old Testament and the incredible story of our God and His people from the very beginning when there was completely nothing to a time where His faithful promises are steadily being fulfilled. This time from Genesis to Malachi has shown us creation, humanity's fall into sin, and God's choosing a people and intimately caring for them through discipline and rescue, time and time again. However, the true and lasting rescue is about to be revealed. We have seen imperfect leaders and kings rule God's people up until now, but the New Testament is about to unveil the promised, true King. Everything we have read has been pointing and leading up to this. Some time has passed since the ending of the Old Testament, but after 400 years of not hearing from God, the KING is here!

This next sermon series, *The King is Here*, will cover the life of Jesus in four books called the Gospels. *Gospel* means good news. These books of good news—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—record many of the same details of Jesus, but in their own style. With each book we are going to examine different periods of Jesus' life and what ramifications it has for us. Here is what the next four weeks will look like:

Matthew – Jesus' birth, temptation, baptism, and disciples

Mark – Jesus' ministry through teaching and miracles

Luke – The events at the end of Jesus' life culminating with his death

John – The resurrection of Jesus and events immediately after

MATTHEW

ORDER IN NEW TESTAMENT

1

28

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

TYPE

GOSPEL, SYNOPTIC



OVERVIEW

One of the Gospels, this book is an account and testimony of Jesus Christ. It was written by Matthew, an educated tax collector who was one of the original Twelve Apostles. His account is unique in that it was written for the Jewish people, to persuade them that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Matthew understood the importance of supporting his testimony with Old Testament prophecy, which he cited more than 50 times. The book is a balance of stories, teachings, miracles, and prophecies.



WRITTEN
60–45 AD



TIME PERIOD COVERED
7 BC to 26 AD



AUTHOR
Matthew the Apostle



* For an additional introduction to the book of Matthew, see page 152.

WEEK 29 BIBLE READINGS

DAY 1 – MON, JUL 19

Matthew 1 & 2 (Jesus' birth)



WEEK 29
DAY 2 – TUE, JUL 20

Matthew 3:13-4:11 (Jesus' baptism and temptation)



WEEK 29
DAY 3 – WED, JUL 21

Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13 (Jesus calls His disciples)



WEEK 29

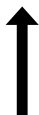
DAY 4 – THU, JUL 22

Matthew 10 (Jesus sends out the twelve disciples)



WEEK 29
DAY 5 – FRI, JUL 23

Matthew 16:13-28 (The cost of discipleship)



MATTHEW SERMON NOTES

July 18

MARK

ORDER IN NEW TESTAMENT

2

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

16

TYPE

GOSPEL, SYNOPTIC



OVERVIEW

As one of the Gospels that detail the ministry of Jesus Christ, Mark is written by John Mark, who was a friend of the Apostle Peter. He later traveled with the Apostle Paul and his assistant Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey around Asia Minor. Mark's account is unique in that it is written to a Gentile audience, and he emphasizes Christ's actions more than His teachings. As such, the book is filled with miracles Jesus Christ performed during His ministry. Mark's testimony shows how powerful, kind, and merciful God is.



WRITTEN
50-60 AD



TIME PERIOD COVERED
23-36 AD



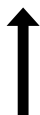
AUTHOR
John Mark, a friend who traveled with the Apostle Paul



* For an additional introduction to the book of Mark, see page 153.

WEEK 30 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, JUL 26

Mark 1:21-45



WEEK 30
DAY 2 – TUE, JUL 27

Mark 4



WEEK 30
DAY 3 – WED, JUL 28

Mark 6:30-52



WEEK 30
DAY 4 – THU, JUL 29

Mark 10:17-31



WEEK 30
DAY 5 – FRI, JUL 30

Mark 12:28-34



LUKE

ORDER IN NEW TESTAMENT	NUMBER OF CHAPTERS	TYPE
3	24	GOSPEL, SYNOPTIC



OVERVIEW

The third of the Gospels is also an account and testimony of Jesus Christ, written by Luke, who was a physician by trade. His account offers a balanced view of Christ's ministry, speaking to both the Jew and the Gentile. Much of Luke's Gospel involves Jesus's dealings with the common man, and he gives more stories involving women than the other records. The Gospel of Luke shares the good news that Jesus Christ offers salvation for all humankind.



WRITTEN
60-81 A.D.



TIME PERIOD COVERED
7 B.C. to 36 A.D.



AUTHOR
Luke the Historian, Physician, and Gentile



* For an additional introduction to the book of Luke, see page 153.

WEEK 31 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, AUG 2

Luke 22:1-22



WEEK 31
DAY 2 – TUE, AUG 3

Luke 22:31-34, 39-62



WEEK 31
DAY 3 – WED, AUG 4

Luke 22:63-23:25



WEEK 31
DAY 4 – THU, AUG 5

Luke 23:32-43



WEEK 31
DAY 5 – FRI, AUG 6

Luke 23:44-56



JOHN

ORDER IN NEW TESTAMENT

4

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

21

TYPE

GOSPEL



OVERVIEW

The Gospel of John is also an account of the ministry and a testimony of Jesus Christ. Most of John's account is unique, with 90% being original. While the other three Gospels focus on the works and words of Jesus, John does not contain much of the same fundamental material from the other accounts. It may have been that he was writing to the members of Christ's church who were already familiar with Jesus, and was writing to provoke and increase their faith. John emphasizes more of Jesus' identity as deity, the Son of God.



WRITTEN
90 AD



TIME PERIOD COVERED
33-26 AD



AUTHOR
John the Apostle



* For an additional introduction to the book of John, see page 153.

WEEK 32 BIBLE READINGS
DAY 1 – MON, AUG 9

John 20:1-18



WEEK 32
DAY 2 – TUE, AUG 10

John 20:19-31



WEEK 32
DAY 3 – WED, AUG 11

John 21:1-19



WEEK 32
DAY 4 – THU, AUG 12

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-8



WEEK 32

DAY 5 – FRI, AUG 13

Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19-20; Acts 1:9-11; John 21:24-25



BIBLE BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

JOB

Considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece, the book of Job is an honest portrayal of God allowing a good man to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, revealed God's loving sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone. In the depths of agony, he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion with the truth that he alone is wise (chs. 38-41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (ch. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 1500 and 500 b.c.

PSALMS

The book of Psalms is filled with the songs and prayers offered to God by the nation of Israel. Their expressions of praise, faith, sorrow, and frustration cover the range of human emotions. Some of the Psalms dwell on the treasure of wisdom in God's Word. Others reveal the troubled heart of a mourner. Still others explode with praise to God and invite others to join in song. This diversity is unified by one element: they are centered upon the one and only living God. This Creator God is King of all the earth and a refuge to all who trust in him. Many of the Psalms are attributed to King David. The writing and collection of the Psalms into their present form spans the fifteenth to the third centuries b.c.

PROVERBS

Practical wisdom for living is the central concern of the book of Proverbs. We are told that the beginning and essence of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (1:7; 9:10). Proverbs often contrasts the benefits of seeking wisdom and the pitfalls of living a fool's life. While the wicked stumble in "deep darkness" (4:19), "the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day" (v. 18). Proverbs is a collection of Israelite wisdom literature, including an introductory section (chs. 1-9) that gives readers a framework for understanding the rest of the book. The book includes the work of various authors, but much of it is attributed to King Solomon. It dates from between the tenth and sixth centuries b.c.

ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes contains reflections of an old man, the "Preacher," as he considered the question of meaning in life. He looked back and saw the futility ("vanity") of chasing after even the good things this life can offer, including wisdom, work, pleasure, and wealth. Even if such things are satisfying for a time, death is certain to end this satisfaction. In fact, God's judgment on Adam for his sin (Gen. 3:17-19) echoes throughout the book (especially 12:7). Yet the person who lives in the fear of the Lord can enjoy God's good gifts. Young people, especially, should remember their Creator

while they still have their whole lives before them (12:1). Traditionally interpreters of Ecclesiastes have identified the “Preacher,” who is also called “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1), as Solomon (tenth century b.c.).

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

According to the most common interpretation, the Song of Solomon is a collection of love poems between a man and a woman, celebrating the sexual relationship God intended for marriage. God established marriage, including the physical union of a husband and wife (Gen. 2:18-25), and Israelite wisdom literature treasures this aspect of marriage as the appropriate expression of human sexuality (Prov. 5:15-20). The Song of Solomon has also been understood as an illustration of the mutual love of Christ and his church. It is possible that Solomon (tenth century b.c.) is the author (1:1). However, this verse could mean that the Song was dedicated to Solomon or was written about him, and therefore many scholars regard the book as anonymous.

ISAIAH

Isaiah lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of Assyria. He spoke the word of God to a people who were “deaf and blind” (see 6:10), who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster. He warned that the sin of the people of Judah would bring God’s judgment, yet he also declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return them from exile. The book speaks of a “servant,” a “man of sorrows,” who would be “wounded for our transgressions,” accomplishing God’s purposes of salvation (52:13-53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which God will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing eternal peace. Isaiah prophesied about 740-700 b.c. (possibly till the 680s).

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah, often called the “weeping prophet” because of his sorrow over the persistent message of God’s judgment, prophesied to the nation of Judah from the reign of King Josiah in 627 b.c. until sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. He dictated his prophecies to a scribe named Baruch (36:4, 32). Jeremiah’s task as a prophet was to declare the coming judgment of God. However, throughout the book we also see God’s concern for repentance and righteousness in individuals as well as nations. This dual focus is seen in God’s instructions to Jeremiah: he was “to pluck up and to break down” but also “to build and to plant” (1:10). Jeremiah sees a future day when God will write his law on human hearts, and “they shall all know me,” and “I will remember their sin no more” (31:33-34).

LAMENTATIONS

The book of Lamentations is made up of five poems, each an expression of grief over the fall of Jerusalem. Like a eulogy at a funeral, these laments are intended to mourn a loss—in this case, the loss of a nation. The latter half of chapter 3 implies that the purpose behind the book’s graphic depictions of sorrow and suffering was to produce hope in the God whose compassion is “new every morning” (v. 23) and whose

faithfulness is great even to a people who have been condemned for their own unfaithfulness. The author, while not identified in the book itself, may have been the prophet Jeremiah, who was said to have “uttered a lament for Josiah” (2 Chron. 35:25). Lamentations was probably written shortly after Jerusalem’s fall in 586 b.c.

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 b.c. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the “likeness” of the Lord himself. Ezekiel was keenly aware of God’s presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem. After Jerusalem’s fall (in 586), Ezekiel prophesied hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God’s covenant, the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (ch. 37) is a classic picture of God’s ability to renew his people.

DANIEL

Exiled to Babylon in 605 b.c., Daniel was one of several young men chosen to serve in Nebuchadnezzar’s court. When Persia conquered Babylon in 539, Daniel was again given a position of power. He remained faithful to God in both of these hostile environments. From the interpretation of dreams, to the familiar stories of the fiery furnace, the lions’ den, and the handwriting on the wall, to the prophetic visions, the recurrent theme is God’s sovereignty over human affairs. In the historical sections (chs. 1-6) God supernaturally rescued Daniel and his friends. The rest of the book consists of visions of future judgment and deliverance by the Messiah. Some of Daniel’s prophetic themes are echoed in the New Testament, especially in Revelation.

HOSEA

Hosea has been called the “death-bed prophet of Israel” because he was the last to prophesy before the northern kingdom fell to Assyria (about 722 b.c.). His ministry followed a golden age in the northern kingdom, with a peace and prosperity not seen since the days of Solomon. Unfortunately, with this prosperity came moral decay, and Israel forsook God to worship idols. So God instructed Hosea to marry a “wife of whoredom” (1:2), whose unfaithfulness to her husband would serve as an example of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Hosea then explained God’s complaint against Israel and warned of the punishment that would come unless the people returned to the Lord and remained faithful to him. The book shows the depth of God’s love for his people, a love that tolerates no rivals.

JOEL

Little is known about the prophet Joel, although his concern for Judah and Jerusalem suggests that he ministered in Judah. Joel told of a locust plague that had struck Israel and which, he said, foreshadowed the “day of the Lord.” The day of the Lord was a time greatly anticipated by the Israelites because they believed that God would then judge the nations and restore Israel to her former glory. Yet, said Joel, God would

punish not only the nations but unfaithful Israel as well. Joel urged everyone to repent, and told of a day when God would “pour out [his] Spirit on all flesh” (2:28). That day arrived on the first Christian Pentecost (Acts 2:17). While the date of the book is uncertain (ninth to sixth century b.c.), its message is valid for all time.

AMOS

Amos, possibly the first of the writing prophets, was a shepherd and farmer called to prophesy during the reigns of Uzziah (792-740 b.c.) in the southern kingdom and Jeroboam II (793-753) in the north. During this time both kingdoms enjoyed political stability, which in turn brought prosperity. It was also a time of idolatry, extravagance, and corruption. The rich and powerful were oppressing the poor. Amos denounced the people of Israel for their apostasy and social injustice and warned them that disaster would fall upon them for breaking the covenant. He urged them to leave the hypocrisy of their “solemn assemblies” (5:21) and instead to “let justice roll down like waters” (v. 24). Nevertheless, said Amos, God would remember his covenant with Israel and would restore a faithful remnant.

OBADIAH

Obadiah wrote this shortest book of the Old Testament probably soon after the armies of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem (586 b.c.). During this conquest, the people of Edom helped capture fleeing Israelites and turn them over to the Babylonians. They even took up residence in some Judean villages. This angered the Lord, for the Edomites, as descendants of Esau, were related to the Israelites (Gen. 25:21-26, 30) and therefore should have helped them. Obadiah prophesied that Edom would be repaid for mistreating God’s people. Obadiah also asserted that God is sovereign over the nations and that the house of Jacob would be restored because of God’s covenant love for his people.

JONAH

Because it tells of a fish swallowing a man, many have dismissed the book of Jonah as fiction. But 2 Kings 14:25 mentions Jonah as living during the time of Jeroboam II (about 793-753 b.c.), and Jesus referred to Jonah as a historical person (Matt. 12:39-41). Unlike other prophetic books, Jonah focuses on the prophet himself rather than on his message. When God sent Jonah to Nineveh he rebelled, was swallowed by a fish, repented, and fulfilled his mission after all. When Nineveh repented, the reason for Jonah’s rebellion became clear: he had feared that God would forgive the Ninevites; and when God did forgive them, Jonah resented it (4:1-3). The book lists no author, but only Jonah himself could have known all the facts it records.

MICAH

Micah prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (about 750-700 b.c.), at about the same time as Isaiah. It was a time of prosperity, and Micah denounced the wealthy, who were oppressing the poor, and warned of impending judgment. The northern kingdom actually fell during Micah’s ministry, in 722, and

Judah almost fell in 701 (2 Kings 18-20). The book contains three sections, which alternate between words of warning and messages of hope. Micah told of a day when there would be peace among all nations, who would then be able to “beat their swords into plowshares” (4:3), and of a royal deliverer who would save God’s people from all her enemies. This deliverer would be born in Bethlehem (5:2).

NAHUM

When Jonah preached repentance on the streets of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, the people responded and were spared. A century later, sometime between 663 and 612 b.c., Nahum preached in a time when Nineveh would not repent. Nineveh, which had destroyed Israel’s northern kingdom in 722, itself fell to Babylon in 612—just a few years after Nahum’s warning. The Assyrians were notorious for the brutality of their treatment of other nations. Nahum declared, however, that God is sovereign: he punishes whom he will, and they are powerless to stop him. Much of Nahum’s prophecy was directed to the people of Judah, who could rejoice at the good news (1:15) of Nineveh’s impending fall.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk was probably written about 640-615 b.c., just before the fall of Assyria and the rise of Babylon (Chaldea). God used Assyria to punish Israel (722); now he would use Babylon to punish Assyria and Judah. This prophecy would be fulfilled several decades after Habakkuk, in 586. The “theme question” of Habakkuk is, how can God use a wicked nation such as Babylon for his divine purpose? God judges all nations, said Habakkuk, and even Babylon would eventually be judged (Babylon fell to Persia in 539). Though God’s ways are sometimes mysterious, “the righteous shall live by his faith” (2:4) while awaiting salvation. These words are quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah prophesied during the reforms of King Josiah (640-609 b.c.), who brought spiritual revival to Judah after the long and disastrous reign of Manasseh. Zephaniah pronounced God’s judgment on corruption and wickedness but also his plan to restore Judah. He spoke of the coming “day of the Lord,” when sin would be punished, justice would prevail, and a “remnant” of the faithful would be saved. The term “day of the Lord” occurs throughout the Bible referring both to impending historical judgments from God and to his final judgment at the end of time. Though Zephaniah does not give details about this day, he speaks of its fearsome consequences (1:18) and calls people to seek the Lord (2:3).

HAGGAI

When the first wave of Jewish exiles returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 538 b.c., they began to rebuild the temple but soon gave up. Inspired by the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, they finally completed the task in 516. Haggai rebuked the people for living in “paneled houses” while the house of God remained in

ruins (1:4). He warned that, despite their best efforts, their wealth would never suffice, because the Lord was not pleased with their neglect of his temple (see Lev. 26:2-20). He called them to repent and renew their covenant with the God of their fathers. He assured them that God would achieve his purposes for his people and for all other nations. The rebuilding of the temple symbolized God's restored presence among his people.

ZECHARIAH

As Haggai encouraged the returned Jewish exiles to rebuild the temple, Zechariah encouraged them to repent and renew their covenant with God. Such spiritual renewal would be necessary for the people to be ready to worship God once the temple was rebuilt (about 516 b.c.). He accused them of doing the very things their ancestors had done before the exile. He was concerned about social justice for widows, orphans, and foreigners. But as the people endured opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea, Zechariah reassured them of God's abiding comfort and care. God would continue his covenant with Israel. Messianic hope was rekindled during Zechariah's ministry, and the book ends with the promise that the Lord would establish his rule over all the earth (14:9).

MALACHI

Although the urging of Haggai and Zechariah had brought the completion of the temple (516 b.c.), this had not produced the messianic age many expected. The warm response to Zechariah's call to repentance had grown cold, because God apparently had not restored the covenant blessings. Malachi, writing a short time later, called the people to repentance with respect to: the priesthood, which had become corrupt; worship, which had become routine; divorce, which was widespread; social justice, which was being ignored; and tithing, which was neglected. "Will man rob God?" the Lord asked through Malachi (3:8), and he promised to "open the windows of heaven" (v. 10) for those who pay their full tithe. Malachi predicted the coming of both John the Baptist and Jesus, referring to each as a "messenger" of God (3:1).

The New Testament

MATTHEW

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as Israel's Messiah. The account alternates between Jesus' activities of healing and casting out demons, and major blocks of his teaching, including the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7), the Parables of the Kingdom (ch. 13), and the Olivet Discourse (chs. 24-25). The Sermon on the Mount includes the Beatitudes (5:3-12) and the Lord's Prayer (6:5-15). The book closes with the Great Commission (28:18-20). A recurring theme is the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, culminating in his pronouncement of "seven woes" upon them (ch. 23). As do all four Gospel accounts, Matthew focuses on Christ's three-year ministry and his death and resurrection. Matthew probably wrote his Gospel in the 50s or 60s a.d.

MARK

The Gospel of Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, healed the sick, and died as a ransom for sinners. In addition to Jesus, Mark features three main groups of people: the disciples, the crowds, and the religious leaders, none of whom understood Jesus. When the time came for Jesus to go to the cross, the religious leaders arrested him, the disciples abandoned him, and the crowds jeered him. Only when he died alone on the cross did a Roman centurion recognize that he was the Son of God. Though the book is anonymous, tradition identifies John Mark (Acts 12:12) as the author. He may have based his Gospel on Peter's preaching, writing sometime in the 50s or 60s a.d.

LUKE

The Gospel of Luke is in the form of a letter to a man named Theophilus. Luke wrote after having carefully investigated all the facts about Christ (1:1-4). Luke documents Christ's life from before his birth through his ministry, death, and resurrection. Jesus carried out his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, announcing the good news of salvation. He showed numerous times his compassion for the poor and the outcast. He fulfilled prophecy and carried out his purpose: to seek and save the lost. Luke gives the fullest account of Christ's birth, and only Luke records the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. Luke, a physician and a colleague of Paul, probably wrote this account in the early 60s a.d. He also wrote Acts.

JOHN

The Gospel of John was written to persuade people to believe in Jesus (20:30-31). The opening verses declare that Jesus is God, stressing his unique relationship with God the Father. The book focuses on seven of Jesus' signs (miracles), to show his divinity. Jesus called people to believe in him, promising eternal life. He proved he could give life by raising Lazarus (ch. 11) and by his own death and resurrection. John features Christ's seven "I am" statements, his encounters with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, his Upper Room teachings and washing of the disciples' feet (chs. 13-16), and his high priestly prayer (ch. 17). It includes the most well-known summary of the gospel (3:16). The author was the apostle John, writing about a.d. 85.

