

Introduction to Genesis

After a brief introduction in which the creation and the curse are described, the book gets down to its major theme which is the story of the patriarchs, that is, the fathers of the human race and fathers of the Hebrew families.



The Human Race— After the Fall, two great civilizations developed on earth. We are introduced first to the Cainite civilization, which centered around Cain and Lamech. It was a godless, lawless civilization, one that produced a brilliant social and scientific culture, but ruled out God. Side by side with the Cainite culture a Sethite civilization developed. A culture that centered around Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, and Noah. These were godly men, saints and seers, who sought to walk with God amid surrounding gloom.

After the Flood a new generation of fathers arose. Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, became the progenitors of the new world. From Ham came Nimrod, a great rebel, founder of the tower of Babel and leader in lawless plans that brought further judgment from God: the confounding of human language and dispersal of mankind into ethnic groups. From Shem came Terah, Haran, and, finally, Abraham; the man chosen by God to be "the father of all them that believe."

The Hebrew Family— The Hebrew people had three titular heads: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. About half of the book of Genesis is concerned with the story of these three men to whom God gave the promises that underly the Hebrew nation.

There were also twelve tribal heads, the sons of Jacob. For the most part, the stories of these men are woven into the story of Joseph. His story takes up a quarter of the entire book, a youth once detested but remarkably raised up to rescue and rule his people in Egypt until God's purposes are complete.

Introduction to Leviticus

Leviticus begins with the people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. The glory of the Lord had just filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-38) and God now tells Moses to instruct the Levitical priests and the people of Israel concerning sacrifices, worship, the priesthood, ceremonial cleanness, the Day of Atonement, feasts and holy days, and the Year of Jubilee.

The central message is that God is holy and he requires his people to be holy and gives them specific instructions as to what that looks like. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood.

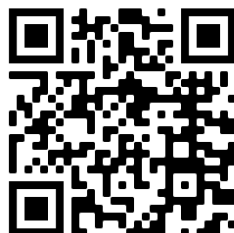
Moses is the writer of the book of Leviticus, writing sometime after giving the law.



Introduction to Numbers

The English title "Numbers" comes from the two censuses that are central features of this book; however, the Hebrew title, "In the Wilderness," is more descriptive of the book.

Numbers tells how God's people traveled from Mount Sinai to the border of the Promised Land. When they



refused to take possession of their promised land out of fear of its inhabitants, God made them wander in the wilderness for nearly forty years.

Throughout the book, God is seen as both holy and faithful. God's holiness is evident in that he cannot ignore rebellion or unbelief and allow them to go unchecked. His faithfulness is evident in how he keeps his covenant and patiently provides for the needs of his people. Numbers ends with a new generation preparing for the conquest of Canaan.

Moses is the writer of the book of Numbers, writing during the final year of his life.

Introduction to Deuteronomy



Deuteronomy, which means "second law," is a retelling by Moses of the teachings and events of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It includes an extended review of the Ten Commandments (4:44-5:33) and Moses' farewell address to a new generation of Israelites as they stand ready to take possession of the Promised Land. Moses reminds them of God's faithfulness and love, but also of God's wrath on the previous generation of Israelites because of their rebellion. Repeatedly he charges Israel to keep the Law.

Deuteronomy is a solemn call to love and obey the one true God. There are blessings for faithfulness and curses for disobedience. The book closes with the selection of Joshua as Israel's new leader and the death of Moses.

Introduction to Joshua



The five books of Moses anticipated the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham regarding the Promised Land. Now (either about 1400 or 1220 B.C.), through a string of military victories under Joshua, Israel conquered the land and divided it among the twelve tribes. In these battles it became evident that God fights for his people when they are "strong and courageous" (1:6, 7, 9, 18; 10:25) and put their full trust in him.

At the close of the book, Joshua charged the people to remain faithful to God and to obey his commands, and the people agreed to do so. "As for me and my house," said Joshua, "we will serve the Lord" (24:15). Although anonymous, the book contains eyewitness testimony, which implies that Joshua is its author.

Introduction to Judges



Judges is named after an interesting collection of individuals who led Israel after Joshua's death until the rise of the monarchy under Samuel (up to about 1050 B.C.). In this time of national decline, despite their promise to keep the covenant (Josh. 24:16-18) the people turned from the Lord and began to worship other gods. "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6; 21:25).

A pattern repeats throughout the book: 1) the people abandoned the Lord; 2) God punished them by raising up a foreign power to oppress them; 3) the people cried out to God for deliverance; and 4) God raised up a deliverer, or judge, for

them. The author of the book is unknown, although some Jewish tradition ascribes it to Samuel.

Introduction to Ruth



The book of Ruth tells of a young Moabite widow who, out of love for her widowed Israelite mother-in-law, abandoned her own culture, declaring, "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (1:16). Though she was destitute and needing to rely on the kindness of others, Ruth's disposition and character captured the attention of Boaz, a close relative of her deceased husband. Boaz fulfilled the role of kinsman-redeemer and took Ruth as his wife.

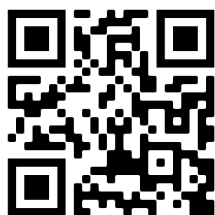
Ruth serves as a wonderful example of God's providential care of his people, and of his willingness to accept Gentiles who seek him. Ruth was an ancestor of Christ. The author is unknown, but the genealogy at the end suggests that it was written during or after the time of David

Introduction to 1st & 2nd Samuel

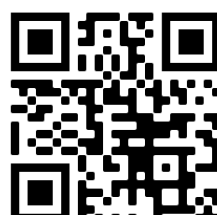
First Samuel records the establishment of Israel's monarchy, at about 1050 BC Samuel led Israel for many years in the combined roles of prophet, priest, and judge. After the people demanded a king like those of the other nations (ch. 8), God directed Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel's first king. When Saul turned from God, David was anointed by Samuel to succeed him. After David killed the giant Goliath, he was brought to Saul's court, eventually becoming the leader of Saul's armies. Saul's subsequent violent

jealousy forced David to flee. The book closes with Saul's death in battle and looks forward to David's reign.

Second Samuel recounts David's reign as king of Israel (about 1010-970 BC). While David had many successes, after his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah (ch. 11) both his kingdom and his own family fell into chaos. His son Absalom led a bloody rebellion against him. Nevertheless David, author of many of the Psalms, was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), a model of deep, heartfelt prayer and repentance. The Davidic Covenant of chapter 7 establishes the eternal rule of David's line, with its ultimate fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ.



The scan code on the left links to a video overview of First Samuel and the code on the right links to the video for Second Samuel



Introduction to 1st Kings

First Kings begins with the death of King David (about 970 BC) and the reign of his son, Solomon, who "excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom" (10:23).



Solomon's unfaithfulness later in life set the stage for general apostasy among the people. The harsh policies of his son Rehoboam led to the revolt of the northern tribes and the division of Israel. The northern tribes would subsequently be called Israel and the southern tribes Judah.

Introduction to Ruth

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Introduction to Chronicles

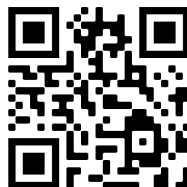
First and Second Chronicles, originally one book, was written sometime after Judah began to return from the Babylonian exile in 538 B.C. and focuses primarily on the history of Judah.



First Chronicles begins with several genealogies, with special emphasis on David and Solomon. The "chronicler" moves next to the history of the kingdom under David, stressing David's interest in worship and his detailed plans for the construction of the temple-which would be built by his son Solomon.

Second Chronicles recalls the greatness of Solomon's reign; however, most of the book focuses on Judah's fall into sin which led to the exile. Judah had several godly kings, especially Hezekiah and Josiah, but it still declined into sin. Yet God remained faithful to his covenant people, and as the book closes it jumps ahead several years, recording the decree of Cyrus that allowed the Jewish exiles to return to their Promised Land.

Introduction to Ezra



The book of Ezra begins where 2 Chronicles ends. As prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 44:28), the Persian King Cyrus sent exiles back to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. led by Zerubbabel. Despite opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea, and after encouragement by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was rebuilt. Then in 458, Ezra led the second of three waves of returning exiles. By the time Ezra arrived, the people had again fallen into sin. Ezra preached God's word and the people repented (10:9-17). Ezra succeeded because God's hand was upon him (7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31). This book, shows God's power in covenant faithfulness, moving even pagan kings to accomplish his redemptive purposes.

Introduction to Nehemiah



In 445 B.C., the Persian King Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah, an Israelite who was a trusted official, to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Along with Nehemiah came the third wave of returning Jewish exiles. Despite tense opposition and disunity, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls. He took

wise defensive measures and set a personal example of courage. Nehemiah did what God had put into his heart (2:12; 7:5) and found that the joy of the Lord was his strength (8:10). When the people began once again to fall into sin, Nehemiah had Ezra read to them from the Law.

Introduction to Esther

The book of Esther never mentions God's name, yet God clearly orchestrated all of its events.

Throughout the book we see God's sovereign hand preserving His people, showing that everything is under His control.

Esther, a Jew living among the exiles in Persia, became queen of the empire in about 480 B.C. Haman, a Persian official, sought to eradicate the Jewish minority, but God had prepared Esther "for such a time as this" (4:14) to save his covenant people.



Introduction to 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 (ch 38-41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (ch 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed.

Introduction to 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 and 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.

Introduction to Proverbs



Practical wisdom for living is the central concern of the book of Proverbs. Proverbs often contrasts the benefits of seeking wisdom and the pitfalls of living a fool's life. While the wicked stumble in darkness the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn. Proverbs is a collection of Israelite wisdom literature, including an introductory section (ch 1-9) that gives readers a framework for understanding the rest of the book.

Introduction to 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; yet the person who lives in the fear of the Lord can enjoy God's good gifts.



Introduction to 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 relationship God intended for marriage. God established marriage, and Israelite wisdom literature treasures the physical union 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.



Introduction to Isaiah

Isaiah lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of Assyria. 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 also speaks of a "servant," a "man of sorrows," who would ultimately accomplish God's purposes of salvation (52:13-53:12).



Introduction to 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 BC 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).

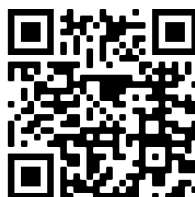
Introduction to Lamentations



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 BC.

Introduction to Ezekiel



Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 BC. 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.

Introduction to 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. Daniel's prophetic themes are echoed in the New Testament, especially in Revelation.

Introduction to the Minor Prophets

The Old Testament closes with twelve “minor prophet” books. The following are brief overviews of all twelve, each with a QR code link to the associated video overview on YouTube.

Hosea ministered in the golden age of the northern kingdom (Israel), 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.



Hosea proclaimed 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.

Joel is a little-known prophet but 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.

Amos, possibly the first of the writing prophets, was a shepherd and farmer called to prophesy during the reigns of Uzziah (792-740 BC) 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 but also idolatry, extravagance, and corruption. 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. Nevertheless, said Amos, God would remember his covenant with Israel and would restore a faithful remnant.

Obadiah probably wrote soon after the armies of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem (586 BC). During this conquest, the people of Edom helped capture fleeing Israelites and turned them over to the Babylonians among other things. 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.



Jonah lived during the time of Jeroboam II (about 793-753 BC), 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).



Micah prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (about 750-700 BC), 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. Micah also 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, unlike Jonah before, preached in a time when Nineveh would not repent. Nineveh, which had destroyed Israel's northern kingdom in 722 BC, itself fell to Babylon in 612 BC just a few years after Nahum's warning. Nahum declared 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 surviving Judah, who could rejoice at the good news (1:15) of Nineveh's impending fall.



Habakkuk was probably written about 640-615 BC 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. 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 prophesied during the reforms of King Josiah (640-609 BC), who brought spiritual revival to Judah after the long and disastrous reign of Manasseh. 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. 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 and Zechariah ministered to the exiles returning from Jerusalem. 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 assured them that God would achieve his purposes for his people and for all other nations.

Zechariah encouraged the returning Jewish exiles 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 BC). 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, writing a short time after Haggai and Zechariah, 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).

Introduction to Mathew

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 (ch 5-7), the Parables of the Kingdom (ch 13), the Olivet Discourse (ch 24-25) and 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.



Introduction to Mark

The Gospel of Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. 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 him as the Son of God.



Introduction to Luke

Luke, a physician and colleague of Paul, 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 also wrote the following book of Acts.

Introduction to John

The Gospel of John was written to persuade people to believe in Jesus. 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 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, and his high priestly prayer. It includes the most well-known summary of the gospel. The author was probably the apostle John, writing about AD 85



Introduction to Acts

Acts picks up where Luke's Gospel leaves off, recording the early progress of the gospel as Jesus' disciples took it from Jerusalem

throughout Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the Mediterranean world. The story begins with Christ's ascension and the events of Pentecost. As Gentiles begin responding to the gospel, the focus shifts to Paul and his missionary journeys. Acts forms a bridge between the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, showing how the apostles carried on Christ's work and providing a historical background for Romans through Revelation. The Acts of the Apostles is the second of two New Testament books written by Luke. Like his Gospel, Acts was a letter to Luke's friend Theophilus, written sometime in AD 62-64.



Introduction to Romans

Romans is the longest and most systematically reasoned of Paul's letters. It is stated in Romans

1:16-17; the gospel is God's power for salvation, because it shows us that the righteousness of God is through faith for all who believe. Paul explains the need for justification through faith because of sin. He then spells out the results of justification by faith in terms of both present experience and future hope. In the next three chapters, he expresses his sorrow that many of his fellow Israelites have not embraced the gospel, and he wrestles with the theological implications of this. He concludes by describing how the gospel should affect one's everyday life. Paul wrote his letter to Rome in about AD 57.



Introduction to Paul's Epistles to Churches

1st Corinthians confronts a carnal, factious, and chaotic church and corrects through the application of sound doctrine on both the individual and corporate level.

2nd Corinthians defends Paul's apostleship while confronting false apostles, and expresses relief that the Corinthians had repented from their rebellion against Paul's instructions.

Galatians is an urgent correction of legalism and a defense of justification by faith alone, which is neither legalism nor antinomianism and must be lived out according to the rule of the Spirit, not the flesh.

Ephesians helps believers understand that their daily conduct must come as a result of their great spiritual privileges in accordance with their heavenly calling in Christ Jesus.

Philippians conveys Paul's love and gratitude for the Philippian believers and exhorts them to a lifestyle of unity, holiness, and joy regardless of their circumstances.

Colossians combats false teaching with the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ.

1st Thessalonians encourages a young, persecuted church in their vibrant, influential faith, and to exhort them in the basic ecclesiology and eschatology.

2nd Thessalonians comforts a young, persecuted church with the promise of the final vindication, to correct confusion about the end time and the practices that had arisen concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction to Paul's Epistles to Individuals

1st Timothy instructs the young pastor Timothy how he and the church are to conduct themselves in the corporate assembly.

2nd Timothy conveys Paul's personal, final instructions and exhortations before his death to his son in the faith, exhorting him to persevere as a faithful man of God until the very end.

Titus instructs a pastor how to develop order, godliness, and doctrinal understanding in newly established churches.

Philemon makes a personal request to Philemon to forgive and restore his runaway slave, Onesimus.

Introduction to Hebrews

The letter to the Hebrews was written to encourage Christians in a time of trial. It does so by focusing on the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. While God spoke in the past "many times and in many ways," he has now spoken to us "by his Son," Jesus Christ, who is the "exact imprint" of God's nature and who "upholds the universe by the word of his power" (1:1-3). Jesus accomplished complete salvation for all who trust in him (1:1-10:18). We dare not "neglect such a great salvation" (2:3; 5:12-6:20; 10:19-39). Rather, in our faith and in our everyday living, we should imitate the example of Christ and of those on the honor roll of faith (chs. 11-13). This letter, whose author is unknown, was probably written between AD 60 and 70.



Introduction to James



Sometimes called "the Proverbs of the New Testament," the book of James practically and faithfully reminds Christians how to live. From perseverance to true faith to controlling one's tongue, submitting to God's will, and having patience, this book aids readers in living authentically and wisely for Christ. Many have claimed that James and the apostle Paul differed on the question of faith versus works, but in reality the spiritual fruit that James talks about simply demonstrates the true faith of which Paul wrote. Their writings are complementary rather than contradictory. Possibly one of the earliest of the New Testament writings (AD 40-50), the book is believed to have been written by Jesus' brother James (Gal. 1:19).

Introduction to Peter's Letters



First Peter exhorts some confused and persecuted believers to stand strong in their faith; repeatedly reminding them of Christ's example, the riches of their inheritance in him, and the hope of his returning again to take them to heaven.

Second Peter confronts some twisted versions of Christian truth being taught and reminds Christians that they have a "more sure word" of truth that as an antidote to heresy: the Scriptures. Christians should, therefore, live in holiness and godliness as we await Christ's return and the salvation He has promised to all believers.

Introduction to John's Letters



First John confronts false teachers who denied the divinity and humanity of Christ.

Furthermore, he promotes biblical fellowship and explains how it being rooted in truth and love, provides reassurance of our union with Christ

Second John guides believers in the correct use of Christian hospitality and warns about helping those who distort the apostolic teachings of Christ.

Third John encourages an individual named Gaius to continue showing loving hospitality and to deal with the autocratic and selfish Diotrephes.

Introduction to Revelation



"The revelation of Jesus Christ" was probably written by the apostle John while in exile on the island of Patmos, off the coast of present-day Turkey. It was addressed to seven actual churches. Revelation begins with letters from Christ himself to these churches, letters that include commendation, criticism, and comfort. Then comes a long series of visions of judgment on the wicked, all in highly symbolic language. The church is depicted under great distress, but is assured of the final triumph of Jesus as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16), bringing to an end the rebellion of humanity and ushering in "a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1), where God himself will reign forever and ever (11:15).