

The Books of the Bible

And How They Relate to One Another

By

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Introduction

As an aid to reading and studying the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, so as to clarify how each book relates to the rest, below is a list of the books of the Bible in chronological order, not necessarily in the order in which they were actually written, but in relation to the historical events contained within each book. For example, the events of the book of Job probably occurred during the century before Moses was born, and we are given details of this period in Exodus 1-4. (In this particular instance, it is hard to know for definite, as no specific date can be assigned to Job).

The book of Job was probably among the first scrolls to have been written for the Hebrew Scriptures, along with Genesis and Exodus, the first books of Moses. For those who have faith, it is evident that God, through His Son appearing as Yahweh or Jehovah, the God of Israel, gave the historical details contained within Genesis to Moses. There is evidence from the book of Jasher, which is an ancient scroll that adds testimony to the books from Genesis to Joshua (and complements them), that the patriarch Job lived during the early years of Moses and he was acquainted with Jethro, priest of Midian, who became Moses' father in law (Jasher chapter 67).

This fits the biblical evidence that Job lived in the nearby land of Uz, which is commonly identified as Edom. Job was probably a descendent of either Esau or Abraham. Also, the book of Job uses God's special name 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah' (the Tetragrammaton), which was first revealed to Moses (cf. Exodus 3), so it is possible that Moses himself wrote the account of what happened to Job. It is evident that these things occurred before Israel was officially God's chosen people at Sinai, because there isn't any mention of Israel in Job, even though Job was said to be 'the greatest man among the people of the East' (Job 1:3).

Anyhow, be that as it may, in the list below, Job is placed around the era of Moses' early life, i.e. that which is recorded in Exodus 1-4, Moses' birth being about 1527 BC. As Job lived at least 170-200 years, the actual events of the book of Job probably occurred well before Moses was born, i.e. in the 17th - 16th century BC.

We need to bear in mind (for those who have faith) that by the time God began to reveal His truth to the Hebrews in written form, through Moses (in the Pentateuch, i.e. the Torah; Genesis to Deuteronomy) and also Job, the oral traditions of humanity that had been passed down through the generations from the beginning, had become corrupted into various myths, and religious beliefs and

writings of the nations, with only fragments of the truth remaining. Even the events surrounding Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had only been passed down orally at that time. So God, through His Son appearing as Yahweh to certain individuals, and also through other selected individuals by special inspiration of His Spirit, progressively gave us, through Israel, His written Word - the revelation of truth.

The dates below are as accurate as possible, largely based on the research of Dr Stephen E. Jones and Professor Jack Finegan, along with my own personal thorough examination of the details contained within Scripture and history.

The main biblical historical books are listed in the **first column**, followed in the **second column** by those prophetic or poetic books that were contemporary with them, along with some occasional historical details, and in the **third column** there is mention of certain events and dates that are contained within those books, so that the reader can understand how each book relates one to another, and can identify its place within history. This can be a useful guide for reading through the Bible.

For further details on how OT biblical chronology is established, see my *Chronology Notes (Old Testament)*

THE OLD TESTAMENT		
		<u>DATE BC</u>
GENESIS	Abram's birth	The human eras before 2000 - 1560's [i.e. early humanity (chapters 2-11) to the era of Joseph] 1952
EXODUS	JOB (c. Exodus chapters 1-4) Moses born The Exodus (Exodus chapter 12)	 1527 1447
LEVITICUS NUMBERS DEUTERONOMY		1447 - 1407

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<p>JOSHUA</p>	<p>Beginning of the Conquest of Canaan Joshua's death</p>	<p>1407 1379</p>
<p>JUDGES</p>	<p>RUTH</p>	<p>c. 1200 (Era of the Judges - 1379-1150's)</p>
<p>1 SAMUEL and 2 SAMUEL</p>	<p>1 CHRONICLES and PSALMS</p>	<p>Eli and Samuel - c.1150's-1051 (1 Samuel 1-7) Saul's reign: 1050-1011 David's reign: 1010-971</p>
<p>1 KINGS and 2 KINGS</p>	<p>2 CHRONICLES, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES and SONG OF SOLOMON</p>	<p>Solomon's reign: 970-931 Assyrian Captivity of Israel - 721 Babylonian Captivity of Judah/Destruction of Jerusalem and Temple - 587/586</p>
<p>DANIEL</p>	<p>The Babylonian Captivity (2 Kings 24-25)</p>	<p>Daniel's ministry c. 604-530 Medes and Persians conquer Babylon - 537 First Year of Darius I - 521</p>

<p>EZRA and NEHEMIAH</p>	<p>ESTHER</p>	<p>534-432</p> <p>Xerxes Ahasuerus reign: 485-465</p> <p>Artaxerxes I Longimanus reign: 464-423</p> <p>Ezra arrives in Jerusalem in 458</p> <p>Nehemiah becomes governor in 444</p> <p>Last recorded date in OT - 432 (Neh. 13:6)</p>
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A CLOSE UP OF THE PROPHETS

This order is as close as possible, as some of the books give no precise date

	<u>DATE BC</u>	
<p>2 KINGS</p>	<p>(After Elisha - 2 Kings chapter 13)</p> <p>JONAH, JOEL and AMOS</p>	<p>c. 781-750</p>
	<p>ISAIAH ~</p> <p>HOSEA, MICAH and NAHUM</p>	<p>c. 767-687</p>
	<p>ZEPHANIAH</p>	<p>c. 640-609</p>

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	JEREMIAH ~ LAMENTATIONS	Jeremiah's ministry c. 627-560 Jehoiachin released in 560 (Jer. 52:31)
DANIEL	HABAKKUK	Daniel's ministry c. 604-530
	EZEKIEL ~ OBADIAH	Ezekiel's ministry c. 594-572
EZRA and NEHEMIAH	HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH	The return from Babylon c. 534 onwards Haggai and Zechariah's ministry - 520-515
	MALACHI He would've ministered sometime during Nehemiah's governorship and the reign of Artaxerxes I	Nehemiah's governorship: 444-432 Artaxerxes I: 464-423

THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

Over 400 years elapsed before the writings of the Greek Scriptures began; otherwise known, of course, as the New Testament. During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, after the writing of their scrolls, which was completed shortly after the 32nd year of Artaxerxes I Longimanus of Persia (432 BC. cf. Nehemiah 13:6-7), the Great Synagogue of the Jews met to decide the official canon of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Jews added no further books to the OT after that time. These facts are mentioned by the Jewish historian, Josephus. ¹

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Luke is placed as the main account concerning the life of Jesus the Messiah (or Christ) because he was the one who continued the story with the book of **Acts**. The Gospel accounts, and Acts, were evidently written sometime during the Acts period – c. 33-66 AD, though it is possible that some were written later. Nevertheless, they would've been written during the lifetime of the Apostles in the 1st century AD. ²

	(Paul's letters are in blue)	<u>DATE AD</u>
LUKE	MATTHEW, MARK and JOHN	Christ's birth till His death, resurrection and ascension 2 BC ³ – 33
ACTS Chapter 18	1 & 2 THESSALONIANS	c. 52-53
Chapter 19-20:5	GALATIANS, 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS, 1 TIMOTHY, ROMANS, TITUS	c. 55-58
Chapter 28:30-31	PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON, EPHESIANS, 2 TIMOTHY	c. 61-63 ⁴

JAMES		c. 61 (at the latest)
HEBREWS	Possibly written by Paul	c. 61-65
1 & 2 PETER		c. 64-65
JUDE		c. 66
1, 2, & 3 JOHN		c. 60-65 or 92-95
REVELATION	Although it is commonly accepted that the best evidence in the writings of the Church Fathers is that Revelation was written towards the end of Domitian's reign, there is even weightier evidence that it was written during Nero's reign	c. 65 or 95 ⁵ Emperor Nero's reign: 54-68 Emperor Domitian's reign: 81-96

For information on historical and biblical dates in relation to Biblical Prophecy, see the section *The Great Prophetic Plan Revealed*.

Endnotes:

¹ For further reading in these matters, see F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Revised Edition, 1991, Marshall-Pickering), particularly chapter 8, *The Canon of Scripture*. Of course, many other important events transpired during the intertestamental period, which included the Greek translation of the OT known as the Septuagint (LXX), all of which played a part in setting the scene for the writing of the NT.

² John A. T. Robinson in his notable work *Redating the New Testament* (SCM Press, 1976) makes a strong case for placing *all* of the NT writings as being originally written before 70 AD.

³ Although the dating of Jesus' birth often appears highly speculative, with dates varying from 1 to 12 BC (!), I think a strong and balanced case can be made for accepting the 2 BC date as the correct one. See Dr. Stephen E. Jones, *When REALLY was Jesus Born?* (a booklet available via his website God's Kingdom Ministries); Ernest L. Martin, *The Star That Astonished The World*, (ASK Publications, 1996); & Prof. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology, Revised Edition* (1998, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.).

I also accept the year of Christ's death and resurrection as 33 AD as opposed to the other most probable alternative of 30 AD. See Prof. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology, Revised Edition* (1998, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.) & Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of The Life of Christ*, (1977, Zondervan).

⁴ It is worth noting that some biblical scholars hold the view that Paul wrote these 'prison epistles' while being held for trial in Caesarea (e.g. John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, pp. 71-82). Either way, whether written from Caesarea or Rome, these letters would've been penned during a 4-5 year span from c. 59-64 AD, though some believe that 2 Timothy, and possibly Titus, were written later after an 'alleged' release and re-imprisonment of Paul shortly before his execution/martyrdom. For further details on Paul's letters, see my article *Paul's Letters and the Missionary Journeys*.

⁵ It has come to my attention, through reading the excellent book *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating The Book of Revelation* by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr, that the weight of evidence for the writing of Revelation, both external and internal, actually leans heavily toward the early date of c. 65 AD, during the reign of Emperor Nero. The evidence also indicates that the whole New Testament canon was completed before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (see note 2 above).

There have been many respected biblical scholars who hold to this early date for the writing of Revelation (e.g. F. F. Bruce, Philip Schaff, Adam Clarke, F. W. Farrar, Milton S. Terry, F. J. A. Hort, Alfred Edersheim, etc). In fact, during the late 19th century it was the predominant position held by the majority of biblical scholars (see Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 27-38).