

The Old Testament Timeline

Every major person, event, and epoch — from Creation to Malachi —
with chapter and verse references throughout

12

ERAS

110

EVENTS

640

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

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HOW TO READ THIS TIMELINE

Standard Event

Primeval History

CREATION — C. 2166 BC

IN THE BEGINNING *Gen 1:1-2:3*

The Six Days of Creation

God creates the entire cosmos from nothing in six days, then rests on the seventh, sanctifying it as the Sabbath.

- GEN 1:1-5** Day 1 — “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Light separated from darkness.
- GEN 1:6-8** Day 2 — The firmament divides the waters above from below; the sky formed.
- GEN 1:9-13** Day 3 — Dry land, seas, vegetation, seed-bearing plants, fruit trees.
- GEN 1:14-19** Day 4 — Sun, moon, and stars to govern time and seasons.
- GEN 1:20-23** Day 5 — Sea creatures and birds. “Be fruitful and multiply.”
- GEN 1:24-31** Day 6 — Land animals; mankind created in the image of God (imago Dei), male and female. Dominion granted over creation.
- GEN 2:1-3** Day 7 — God rests, blesses, and sanctifies the seventh day — origin of the Sabbath.
- GEN 2:4-25** Second creation account: Adam formed from dust (2:7); placed in Eden; Eve formed from his rib (2:21–22). “It is not good for the man to be alone” (2:18).

PRIMEVAL *Gen 3:1-24*

The Temptation and The Fall

The serpent deceives Eve; both Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit — sin, shame, and death enter the world. The first promise of redemption is given.

- GEN 3:1-5** The serpent: “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Sows doubt; promises: “You will be like God.”
- GEN 3:6-7** Eve sees the fruit as good for food, pleasing, desirable for wisdom — eats; gives to Adam. Eyes opened; they realize their nakedness and sew fig leaves.
- GEN 3:14-15** The Protoevangelium (first gospel): God curses the serpent — “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” — the first Messianic prophecy.
- GEN 3:16** Eve’s curse: pain in childbearing multiplied; desire for husband who will rule over her.
- GEN 3:17-19** Adam’s curse: ground cursed; toil and sweat; “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”
- GEN 3:21** God makes garments of skin — first blood shed to cover human shame; an act of grace in judgment.
- GEN 3:22-24** Expelled from Eden; cherubim and a flaming sword guard the Tree of Life.

Cain Murders Abel; Birth of Seth

The first murder — jealousy over worship; Cain's exile; the godly line through Seth.

- GEN 4:3-5** Cain brings grain; Abel brings firstborn flock. LORD regards Abel's offering but not Cain's (cf. Heb 11:4 — Abel offered by faith).
- GEN 4:6-7** "Sin is crouching at the door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." — God's warning unheeded.
- GEN 4:8** Cain rises and kills Abel in the field — the first homicide.
- GEN 4:9** "Am I my brother's keeper?" — perhaps the most consequential question in Scripture.
- GEN 4:10-12** "Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." Cain cursed; a restless wanderer.
- GEN 4:15** God marks Cain for protection — grace even in judgment.
- GEN 4:25-26** Seth born; his son Enosh — "At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD."

Antediluvian Genealogy — Adam to Noah; Enoch Translated

Ten patriarchs with extraordinary lifespans; the remarkable exception of Enoch who never died.

- GEN 5:3-5** Adam fathers Seth at 130; lives to 930 years.
- GEN 5:21-24** Enoch walks with God 300 years — "he was no more, because God took him away." Taken without dying; one of only two in Scripture (cf. Elijah, 2 Kgs 2).
- GEN 5:25-27** Methuselah — 969 years, the longest human lifespan in Scripture. Dies the year of the flood.
- GEN 5:28-29** Lamech names his son Noah: "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed."

The Sons of God, Nephilim, and Humanity's Corruption

Cosmic and human corruption reaches its apex — but grace found in one man.

- GEN 6:2** The sons of God take daughters of men — a disputed passage: fallen angels (1 Enoch view), godly Sethites intermarrying Cainites, or demigod rulers abusing women.
- GEN 6:4** Nephilim on earth — "mighty men of old, men of renown." (Also in Num 13:33 as the "giants" of Canaan.)
- GEN 6:5-6** "Every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time." The LORD grieved and His heart was filled with pain.
- GEN 6:8** "But Noah found favor (grace/chen) in the eyes of the LORD." — the first use of "grace" in Scripture.

Noah and the Great Flood

God judges the world by flood; Noah and family preserved; the Noahic Covenant established with the rainbow as its sign.

- GEN 6:9** Noah described as “a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.” — three distinct virtues.
- GEN 6:14-16** Ark dimensions: 300 cubits long × 50 wide × 30 high (~450×75×45 ft). Three decks; gopher wood sealed with pitch.
- GEN 7:11-12** “All the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.” Rain 40 days and 40 nights; waters prevail 150 days (7:24).
- GEN 7:23** Every living thing on the face of the earth wiped out — only Noah and those with him in the ark survived.
- GEN 8:1** “But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals...” — the pivot. God sends wind over the earth; waters recede.
- GEN 8:4** The ark comes to rest on the mountains of Ararat on the 17th day of the 7th month.
- GEN 8:6-12** Noah sends a raven (circles, returns repeatedly); then a dove — returns with nothing (1st send); returns with fresh olive leaf (2nd send); does not return (3rd send) — land dry.
- GEN 8:20-22** Noah builds an altar; offers burnt offerings. God smells the pleasing aroma; resolves never again to curse the ground or destroy all living creatures. Seasons promised in perpetuity.
- GEN 9:9-17** The Noahic Covenant: God sets His rainbow (qeshet = war bow laid aside) in the clouds. An everlasting covenant with all living creatures — never again destroy by flood.

POST-FLOOD STANDARD EVENT *Gen 10:1-32*

Table of Nations — 70 Peoples of the Earth

The 70 nations from Shem, Ham, and Japheth — a theological map of the ancient world.

- GEN 10:2-5** Japheth’s line: peoples of Europe and Asia Minor — Gomer (Cimmerians), Magog, Madai (Medes/Persians), Javan (Greeks), Tubal, Meshech, Tiras.
- GEN 10:6-20** Ham’s line: Cush (Ethiopia/Arabia), Mizraim (Egypt), Put (Libya), Canaan. Nimrod — “a mighty hunter before the LORD”; founded Babel, Erech, Akkad, Nineveh (10:8–12).
- GEN 10:21-31** Shem’s line (Semites): Elam, Asshur (Assyria), Arphaxad (ancestor of Abram), Lud, Aram (Arameans/Syrians). Eber = Hebrew.

POST-FLOOD *Gen 11:1-9*

The Tower of Babel — Languages Confused; Nations Scattered

Humanity’s united rebellion to make a name for themselves — God scatters them and confuses their speech. The origin of all human linguistic diversity.

- GEN 11:1** “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.”
- GEN 11:4** “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” — the very thing God commanded them to do (9:1), defied.
- GEN 11:5-7** The LORD “comes down” to see — irony: the tower that reaches heaven requires God to descend to find it. “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.”
- GEN 11:8-9** Scattered over all the earth; the city called Babel (= confusion; same as Babylon). The anti-Pentecost, reversed at Pentecost (Acts 2).

Shem to Abram — Ten Post-Flood Generations; Terah's Family

The bridge from Noah to Abraham — lifespans declining sharply; Terah's family introduced.

- GEN 11:10-26** Ten generations: Shem → Arphaxad → Shelah → Eber → Peleg → Reu → Serug → Nahor → Terah → Abram. At Peleg's birth "the earth was divided" (10:25) — possibly the Babel scattering.
- GEN 11:27-30** Terah's family: Abram marries Sarai (barren, 11:30); Nahor marries Milcah; Haran fathers Lot then dies in Ur of the Chaldeans.
- GEN 11:31-32** Terah takes Abram, Sarai, and Lot from Ur, heading to Canaan — but settles in Haran. He dies there at 205.

The Patriarchal Age

C. 2166 – 1805 BC

C. 2091 BC *Gen 12:1-9*

The Call of Abram — Covenant Promise Given

The pivotal commission that will reshape all history — a promise of people, land, and universal blessing.

- GEN 12:1** “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.” — the call to radical, unanchored faith.
- GEN 12:2-3** Three promises: great nation; great name; land. “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” — the Abrahamic blessing (cf. Gal 3:8).
- GEN 12:4** Abram departs at 75 with Sarai, Lot, and all their household — “as the LORD had told him.”
- GEN 12:6-7** Enters Canaan; at Shechem and the great tree of Moreh. God appears: “To your offspring I will give this land.” First altar built.
- GEN 12:10-20** Famine drives Abram to Egypt; the Sarai deception — she taken into Pharaoh’s house. God afflicts Pharaoh’s household until she is released. Abram leaves wealthy but with a stain on his faith.

C. 2086 BC **STANDARD EVENT** *Gen 14:1-24*

Lot Captured; Melchizedek Blesses Abram

First war in Scripture; the mysterious priest-king Melchizedek; Abram refuses the king of Sodom’s riches.

- GEN 14:14-16** Abram musters 318 trained men born in his household; pursues to Dan; attacks at night; recovers Lot, his possessions, and the women and people.
- GEN 14:18-20** Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, brings bread and wine; blesses Abram. Abram gives him a tenth of everything. No genealogy given — cf. Heb 7:3 “without father or mother... like the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.”
- GEN 14:22-24** Abram refuses the king of Sodom’s spoils: “I will not take a thread or the strap of a sandal...so you cannot say ‘I made Abram rich.’” Only God will be his provider.

C. 2081 BC *Gen 15:1-21*

The Abrahamic Covenant — Counted as Righteousness by Faith

The foundational covenant of Scripture — God swears alone through the smoking firepot; faith credited as righteousness; 400 years of affliction foretold.

- GEN 15:1** “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”
- GEN 15:5** “Look up at the sky and count the stars — if indeed you can count them... So shall your offspring be.”
- GEN 15:6** “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” — the key text for Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith (Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6).
- GEN 15:13-14** Prophecy of the Exodus: 400 years of slavery in a foreign land; God will judge that nation; Abram’s descendants will come out with great possessions.
- GEN 15:17-18** Covenant ratification: God alone (as smoking firepot and flaming torch) passes between the animal halves — making the covenant unconditional. Land from the Nile to the Euphrates promised.

Hagar and Ishmael; Covenant of Circumcision

Human impatience produces Ishmael; God's patience institutes circumcision and renames Abram and Sarai.

- GEN 16:11-12** The Angel of the LORD promises Hagar: Ishmael “a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone’s hand against him.” Hagar names God El Roi — “the God who sees me” (16:13).
- GEN 17:1-2** God appears as El Shaddai (God Almighty) to Abram at 99: “Walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”
- GEN 17:5,15** Abram renamed Abraham (“father of many nations”); Sarai renamed Sarah (“princess”). New names mark covenant identity.
- GEN 17:9-14** Circumcision on the eighth day established as covenant sign for every male. “Any uncircumcised male... will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”
- GEN 17:19-21** God confirms Isaac — not Ishmael — will carry the covenant. Ishmael will be blessed with a great nation but the covenant line runs through Isaac.

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; Lot's Rescue

Divine judgment by fire and sulfur — but Abraham's bold intercession and Lot's rescue demonstrate God's mercy within judgment.

- GEN 18:10** Three visitors announce: “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.” Sarah laughs behind the tent door.
- GEN 18:14** “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” — key rhetorical question repeated throughout Scripture (Jer 32:17; Luke 1:37).
- GEN 18:22-33** Abraham's intercession — will God spare the city for 50 righteous? 45? 40? 30? 20? 10? Each time God agrees. Not 10 righteous are found.
- GEN 19:1-11** Two angels in Sodom; men of the city surround Lot's house demanding the visitors for abuse — angels strike them blind.
- GEN 19:24-25** “The LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah — from the LORD out of the heavens.” All five cities of the plain destroyed.
- GEN 19:26** Lot's wife looks back — becomes a pillar of salt. Jesus: “Remember Lot's wife” (Luke 17:32).

Birth of Isaac — The Long-Awaited Son of Promise

After 25 years of waiting, the promise fulfilled — Isaac born to Abraham at 100, Sarah at 90.

- GEN 21:1-3** “The LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said and did for Sarah what he had promised.” Son born; named Isaac (“he laughs”).
- GEN 21:6** Sarah: “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” The laughter of joy replaces the laughter of disbelief (18:12).
- GEN 21:8-21** Isaac weaned; Ishmael mocking. Hagar and Ishmael expelled. God hears Ishmael crying in the desert; shows Hagar a well; promises a great nation from him. Ishmael becomes an archer in Paran; marries an Egyptian.

The Binding of Isaac — The Akedah

Abraham's supreme test — the near-sacrifice on Moriah; God provides the ram; the oath of blessing sworn. A profound type of the Father's sacrifice of His Son.

- GEN 22:2** "Take your son, your only son, whom you love — Isaac — and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there." The site is identified as the future location of Solomon's Temple (2 Chr 3:1).
- GEN 22:5** "We will come back to you." Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:17-19).
- GEN 22:7-8** Isaac: "The fire and wood are here... but where is the lamb?" Abraham: "God himself will provide the lamb." — prophetic; fulfilled centuries later at Calvary.
- GEN 22:11-13** Angel of the LORD calls; knife stopped. A ram caught by its horns in a thicket — offered in Isaac's place. "Jehovah Jireh" — the LORD provides (22:14).
- GEN 22:16-18** God swears by Himself (the greatest possible oath): "I will surely bless you... your descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore... through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed."

Isaac and Rebekah — Providence in Marriage

The longest chapter in Genesis — a masterpiece of narrative showing God's guidance in every step.

- GEN 24:1-4** Abraham swears his servant on his thigh: find Isaac a wife from his own kindred in Mesopotamia — not from the Canaanites. The covenant line must not be diluted.
- GEN 24:12-14** Servant's prayer at the well: the girl who offers water for me and my camels — let her be the one. Before he finishes praying, Rebekah comes out (24:15).
- GEN 24:50-51** Laban and Bethuel: "This is from the LORD; we can say nothing... Here is Rebekah; take her and go." Providential recognition.
- GEN 24:67** "Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah... she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Birth of Jacob and Esau; Sale of the Birthright

Twins struggling in the womb; the oracle of reversal; Esau's contempt for the covenant.

- GEN 25:22-23** Rebekah inquires of God about the struggling twins. "Two nations are in your womb... one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." — the principle of divine election (cf. Rom 9:10-13).
- GEN 25:25-26** Esau born red (Edom) and hairy. Jacob born grasping Esau's heel (Jacob = "heel-grabber / supplanter").
- GEN 25:29-34** Esau returns famished; sells his birthright for red stew. "Esau despised his birthright" (25:34). Commentary: Heb 12:16 calls him godless for this.

C. 1930 BC *Gen 27:1-28:22*

Jacob Steals the Blessing; Flees to Haran; Bethel Dream

Rebekah and Jacob's deception; Esau's grief; the ladder to heaven — the covenant passes through Jacob.

- GEN 27:18-29** Jacob deceives blind Isaac; receives the blessing of lordship and covenant. "Be lord over your brothers... May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed."
- GEN 27:34-36** Esau cries bitterly: "He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" Requests: "Do you have only one blessing, my father?" He also weeps.
- GEN 28:12-15** At Luz (Bethel), Jacob dreams of a stairway (ladder/ramp) from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending. God reaffirms the Abrahamic covenant: land, descendants, all peoples blessed. "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go." Jesus quotes this vision: "You will see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (John 1:51).
- GEN 28:16-19** "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it... This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." Sets up stone pillar; names it Bethel.

C. 1929–1909 BC **STANDARD EVENT** *Gen 29:1-30:43; 35:16-20*

Jacob, Laban, and the Birth of the Twelve Tribal Fathers

Twenty years of labor, two wives, two concubines — twelve sons who will become the twelve tribes of Israel.

- GEN 29:15-20** Jacob loves Rachel; agrees to work 7 years. "They seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her."
- GEN 29:21-25** The wedding night deception — Laban substitutes Leah. The deceiver is decisively deceived by his own method.
- GEN 29:31-30:24** The twelve sons born in order: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (by Leah); Dan, Naphtali (by Bilhah/Rachel's servant); Gad, Asher (by Zilpah/Leah's servant); Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah (by Leah); Joseph (by Rachel).
- GEN 35:16-18** Benjamin born on the road to Bethlehem; Rachel dies in childbirth. She names him Ben-Oni (son of my trouble); Jacob renames him Benjamin (son of my right hand).

C. 1909 BC *Gen 32:22-32*

Jacob Wrestles God — Renamed Israel

The most dramatic night of Jacob's life — the wrestling match that names a nation; Jacob limps into destiny.

- GEN 32:24** "So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak." — identified as God in 32:30; as the Angel in Hos 12:4.
- GEN 32:25** The man cannot overpower Jacob; touches his hip socket — wrenched. Jacob continues wrestling even injured.
- GEN 32:26-28** "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Name changed to Israel: "You have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."
- GEN 32:30** Jacob names the place Peniel ("face of God") — "I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."
- GEN 32:31** The sun rises on Jacob as he passes Peniel, limping because of his hip. Israel always walks with a limp — the mark of genuine encounter with God.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers; Rises to Power in Egypt

The longest narrative in Genesis — betrayal, slavery, false accusation, prison, and vindication. The supreme OT type of Christ.

- GEN 37:3-4** Jacob gives Joseph an ornate robe (coat of many colors). Brothers hate him, “and could not speak a kind word to him.”
- GEN 37:5-11** Two dreams: sheaves bowing; sun, moon, eleven stars bowing. Brothers hate him even more; father rebukes but keeps the matter in mind.
- GEN 37:18-28** Brothers plot to kill him at Dothan; Reuben suggests the cistern (intending to rescue him). Sold to Ishmaelite traders for 20 pieces of silver. They go to Egypt.
- GEN 37:31-35** Coat dipped in goat’s blood; shown to Jacob: “My son’s robe! A ferocious animal has devoured him.” Jacob tears his clothes and mourns; refuses to be comforted.
- GEN 39:2,21,23** “The LORD was with Joseph” — three times stated in his hardship. In Potiphar’s house; in prison. God’s presence transforms every adverse circumstance.
- GEN 39:7-12** Potiphar’s wife: “Come to bed with me.” Joseph: “How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” He flees, leaving his cloak. Falsely accused; imprisoned.
- GEN 41:25-32** Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams: 7 fat cows / 7 good heads of grain = 7 years of abundance; 7 lean cows / 7 thin heads = 7 years of famine. “The matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.”
- GEN 41:39-41** Pharaoh: “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” Joseph appointed second-in-command over all Egypt at age 30.

Joseph Reveals Himself; Jacob’s Family Descends to Egypt

The three-act reunion — testing, weeping, reconciliation — and the great migration of Israel’s family to Goshen.

- GEN 42:6** Joseph’s brothers bow down to him with their faces to the ground — his first dream fulfilled (37:7). He recognizes them; they do not recognize him.
- GEN 44:33-34** Judah’s great speech — offers himself as a slave in Benjamin’s place. The transformation of Judah from one who sold Joseph (37:26) to one who sacrifices himself for his brother.
- GEN 45:4-8** “I am Joseph!... You sold me here, but God sent me ahead of you to save lives... it was not you who sent me here, but God.” — the supreme statement of Providence and forgiveness in the OT.
- GEN 46:3-4** God speaks at Beersheba: “Do not be afraid to go to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again.” — the Exodus already promised.
- GEN 46:27** Total of Jacob’s family: 70 persons (fulfills the “70 nations” of Gen 10 — Israel as a micro-image of humanity).
- GEN 50:19-21** “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” — Joseph’s theology of suffering; a keynote text for understanding the cross.
- GEN 50:24-25** Joseph’s dying charge: “God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land... carry my bones up from this place.” Fulfilled: Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32.

The Book of Job

SETTING: C. 2000–1800 BC (PATRIARCHAL PERIOD)

JOB 1:1-5 *Job 1:1-5*

Job Introduced — Blameless, Upright, Enormously Wealthy

Job is the greatest man in the East and the OT paradigm of righteous prosperity. He sacrifices regularly on behalf of his children — the priestly father.

- JOB 1:1** “This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.” — four distinct moral qualities stacked together. God Himself will use the same description (1:8).
- JOB 1:2-3** 7 sons, 3 daughters. 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, large number of servants. “He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.”
- JOB 1:4-5** Sons feast in turn; Job rises early to offer burnt offerings for each — “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” He does this regularly — preemptive intercession.

JOB 1:6-2:10 *Job 1:6-2:10*

The Heavenly Council — Satan’s Challenge; Two Waves of Catastrophe

The cosmic framework behind Job’s suffering — the Adversary challenges the integrity of faith-based worship. Two tests permitted within God’s sovereign limits.

- JOB 1:6-7** The sons of God (divine council) present themselves before the LORD. The Adversary (hasatan = the accuser) also comes — “from roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”
- JOB 1:8-11** God: “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him.” Satan: “Does Job fear God for nothing? You have put a hedge around him... But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”
- JOB 1:12** God grants permission with one limit: “Do not lay a hand on the man himself.” — God sets the boundaries of testing.
- JOB 1:13-19** Four messengers in rapid succession: Sabeans kill servants, take oxen and donkeys; fire from heaven kills sheep and servants; Chaldeans take camels, kill servants; a great wind collapses the house — all 10 children killed. Each messenger arrives before the previous one finishes speaking.
- JOB 1:20-21** Job tears his robe, shaves his head, falls to the ground — and worships: “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” Not one sin with his lips (1:22).
- JOB 2:4-6** Second challenge: “Skin for skin! Strike his flesh and bones.” God permits — with one limit: “But you must spare his life.”
- JOB 2:7-8** Job afflicted with painful sores from head to foot. Sits among ashes, scraping himself with broken pottery.
- JOB 2:9-10** His wife: “Curse God and die!” Job: “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” In all this Job did not sin in what he said.

Three Friends Arrive — Seven Days of Silence; Job's Lament

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar come to comfort Job — their seven days of silence is the wisest thing they do. Then Job curses the day of his birth.

- JOB 2:11-13** Three friends: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite. They sit on the ground with him 7 days and nights, saying nothing — “because they saw how great his suffering was.” (The only commendable pastoral act they perform.)
- JOB 3:1-3** “After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.” He does not curse God — he curses the day itself.
- JOB 3:3-12** “May the day of my birth perish... May its morning stars become dark... Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?”
- JOB 3:25-26** “What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.” — a snapshot of clinical despair.

First Cycle of Speeches — Retribution Theology vs. Job's Protest

The friends apply traditional retribution theology (you suffer because you sinned). Job protests his innocence and wrestles with God.

- JOB 4:7-8** Eliphaz (1st speech): “Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.” — the retribution principle stated baldly.
- JOB 4:12-16** Eliphaz reports a nighttime vision: a spirit passes; stands still; barely visible. “Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?” — a key argument the friends repeat.
- JOB 6:4** Job: “The arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks in their poison; God's terrors are marshaled against me.” Job sees his suffering as divine attack, not divine discipline.
- JOB 7:17-18** Job darkly parodies Psalm 8: “What is mankind that you make so much of them... that you examine them every morning and test them every moment?” Where the Psalm marvels at God's attention, Job resents it.
- JOB 9:2-3** “How can mere mortals prove their innocence before God? Though they wished to dispute with him, they could not answer him one time out of a thousand.”
- JOB 9:33-35** Job longs for a mediator/arbitrator: “If only there were someone to mediate between us, someone to bring us together, someone to remove God's rod from me.” — a yearning for Christ *avant la lettre*.
- JOB 11:5-6** Zophar (1st speech — harshest): “Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you... Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.”
- JOB 13:15** “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.” — one of Job's most magnificent expressions of defiant faith.
- JOB 14:14** “If someone dies, will they live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come.” — a flicker of resurrection hope.

Second Cycle — Friends Intensify; Job’s Confidence in His Redeemer

The debate escalates — friends grow harsher; Job’s faith paradoxically grows bolder, culminating in his famous Redeemer confession.

- JOB 16:19-21** “Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high... as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as one pleads for a friend.” — Job’s heavenly Advocate, anticipating the NT doctrine of intercession.
- JOB 19:2-3** “How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me.”
- JOB 19:23-27** The climactic confession: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” — the most remarkable resurrection statement in the OT.
- JOB 21:7-13** Job demolishes the retribution principle empirically: “Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?... They spend their years in prosperity.” — the friends have no answer to this.

Third Cycle — Eliphaz Invents Sins; Job’s Magnificent Final Defense

Eliphaz makes up specific sins against Job; Bildad’s speech shrinks; Zophar falls silent. Job’s final defense is one of the greatest ethical self-examinations in literature.

- JOB 22:5-9** Eliphaz (3rd speech) invents accusations: stripped people of clothes, withheld water, turned away hungry, sent widows away empty, crushed orphans. None of this is substantiated anywhere in the text — a cautionary tale about false comfort.
- JOB 23:3-5** “If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me.”
- JOB 23:10** “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” — the refining metaphor; faith through the furnace.
- JOB 28:12-28** The Poem on Wisdom: “Where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? Man does not comprehend its worth... God understands the way to it... And he said to the human race, ‘The fear of the Lord — that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding’” (28:28).
- JOB 31:1-40** Job’s oath of innocence — the most comprehensive moral self-examination in the OT: lust (31:1), deception (31:5), adultery (31:9), mistreating servants (31:13), ignoring the poor (31:16–17), trust in wealth (31:24), secret idolatry (31:26–27), rejoicing at enemy’s ruin (31:29), inhospitality (31:32).
- JOB 31:35-37** “Let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing... I would carry it on my shoulder... like a prince I would approach him.” Job rests his case — undefeated by the friends.

Elihu's Four Speeches — The Fourth Man

A young bystander who has been listening erupts with four speeches — angry at the friends for condemning Job without cause and at Job for self-justification.

- JOB 32:2-5** Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite burns with anger: at the friends because they had found no answer; at Job because he “justified himself rather than God.” He has been waiting because of his youth (32:6–7).
- JOB 32:8** “But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding.” — wisdom is not age-dependent.
- JOB 33:14-18** Elihu: God speaks through dreams and visions to warn people, to turn them from wrongdoing, to keep them from pride — suffering as God’s classroom.
- JOB 34:10-12** “Far be it from God to do evil... It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice.” — Elihu defends God’s justice more precisely than the three friends.
- JOB 36:15** “But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction.” — Elihu’s most constructive contribution: suffering as divine communication.
- JOB 37:22-23** “Out of the north he comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty. The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power.” — Elihu’s speech climaxes and prepares the way for the whirlwind.

God Answers from the Whirlwind — Two Divine Speeches

The most spectacular divine speech in all Scripture — God answers Job not with an explanation but with overwhelming questions about His creation. He never directly answers “why.”

- JOB 38:1-3** “Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: ‘Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’” — the divine cross-examination begins.
- JOB 38:4-7** “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions?... while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”
- JOB 38:8-11** “Who shut up the sea behind doors?... when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?’”
- JOB 38:12-15** “Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?”
- JOB 38:31-33** “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons?” — the cosmos is God’s, not Job’s to manage.
- JOB 39:19-25** The war horse: “Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane?... It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; it does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against its side... it cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds.”
- JOB 40:1-5** Job’s first response: “I am unworthy — how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth.” He is silenced but not yet fully transformed.
- JOB 40:15-24** Behemoth (possibly hippopotamus or primeval creature): “What I made along with you...its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron.”
- JOB 41:1-34** Leviathan (sea monster/crocodile): “Can you put a cord through its nose?... Its back has rows of shields... Flames stream from its mouth; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke pours from its nostrils... Nothing on earth is its equal — a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud.”

Job Repents; God Vindicates Job; Double Restoration

Job is silenced by majesty, not argument; he repents of presumption. God rebukes the friends; Job intercedes for them. Everything restored double.

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|---------------------|---|
| JOB 42:1-5 | “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted... My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.” — the transformation from secondhand to firsthand knowledge of God. |
| JOB 42:6 | “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” — not repentance for sin but for speaking beyond his knowledge about things too wonderful for him. |
| JOB 42:7-8 | God to Eliphaz: “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.” Job’s honest wrestling was more acceptable than the friends’ orthodox-sounding falsehoods. They must offer 7 bulls and 7 rams; Job will pray for them. |
| JOB 42:10 | “After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.” — the key: restoration comes through interceding for those who wronged him. |
| JOB 42:12-15 | Restored: 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, 1,000 donkeys (double). 7 more sons, 3 more daughters. Daughters named Jemimah (Dove), Keziah (Cinnamon), Keren-Happuch (Eye-shadow container). “Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance alongside their brothers.” — remarkable in the ancient world. |
| JOB 42:16-17 | Job lives 140 more years; sees four generations of children and grandchildren. “And so Job died, an old man and full of years.” |

The Exodus and Wilderness

C. 1526 – 1406 BC

C. 1526–1446 BC STANDARD EVENT *Exod 1:1-2:25*

Israel Enslaved in Egypt; Birth and Early Life of Moses

Oppression grows; Pharaoh orders infanticide; the deliverer survives through providence and courage.

- EXOD 1:7-10** Israel multiplies so greatly “the land was filled with them” — fulfillment of Gen 46:3 . A new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph enslaves them, fearing they will join enemies.
- EXOD 1:11-14** Forced labor building Pithom and Rameses. “But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread” — the iron law of persecution that strengthens what it tries to destroy.
- EXOD 1:15-21** Midwives Shiphrah and Puah refuse to kill male infants — “the midwives feared God.” God gives them families. First recorded civil disobedience for conscience’s sake.
- EXOD 1:22** Pharaoh commands: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile.”
- EXOD 2:1-10** Moses born; hidden 3 months; placed in a papyrus basket sealed with tar and pitch in the Nile reeds. Found by Pharaoh’s daughter; his own mother hired as nurse. Named Moses (“drawn out”). The agent of Israel’s deliverance delivered from the very edict meant to destroy him.
- EXOD 2:11-15** Moses at 40 (Acts 7:23) kills an Egyptian taskmaster; flees to Midian when exposed.
- EXOD 2:23-25** “God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.” — the pivot of the book. God’s memory activates the Exodus.

C. 1446 BC *Exod 3:1-4:17*

The Burning Bush — God’s Name Revealed; Moses Commissioned

The most important theophany before Sinai — YHWH revealed; Moses commissioned despite five objections. Deep dive →

- EXOD 3:2-3** A bush burning but not consumed. “Moses thought, ‘I will go over and see this strange sight — why the bush does not burn up.’” Curiosity honored by revelation.
- EXOD 3:5-6** “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” Moses hides his face.
- EXOD 3:7-10** “I have indeed seen the misery of my people... I have heard them crying out... I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them.” God’s seeing + hearing + concern = action.
- EXOD 3:13-15** Moses: “What is his name?” God: “I AM WHO I AM (EHYEH ASHER EHYEH).” Then: “The LORD (YHWH)... This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.” — the most important divine self-disclosure in the OT.
- EXOD 4:1-9** Three signs: staff becomes serpent (4:3–4); hand becomes leprous (4:6–7); Nile water becomes blood (4:9). Signs for unbelief, not just identity.
- EXOD 4:10-12** Objection 4: “I am slow of speech.” God: “Who gave human beings their mouths?... Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”
- EXOD 4:13-16** Objection 5: “Please send someone else.” God’s anger burns; Aaron appointed as spokesman. Moses functions as “God to Pharaoh” (7:1).

The Ten Plagues of Egypt — Judgment on Egypt's Gods

Ten escalating divine judgments — each a blow against a specific Egyptian deity — demanding Israel's release. Deep dive →

- EXOD 7:14-25** Plague 1 — Nile to blood: fish die, stench, no drinking water. 7 days. Targets Hapi/Osiris (the Nile god). Magicians replicate; Pharaoh hardens heart.
- EXOD 8:1-15** Plague 2 — Frogs: invade beds, ovens, kneading bowls. Targets Heqet (frog-headed fertility goddess). Magicians replicate; Pharaoh pleads for removal then re-hardens.
- EXOD 8:16-19** Plague 3 — Gnats/lice from dust. Magicians cannot replicate: "This is the finger of God." First admission of divine power.
- EXOD 8:20-32** Plague 4 — Dense fly swarms. First with the distinction: Goshen spared (8:22). Pharaoh offers compromise; Moses insists on full obedience.
- EXOD 9:1-7** Plague 5 — Livestock disease. All Egyptian cattle die; Israel's are unharmed (9:6). Pharaoh verified this — "not one of the animals of the Israelites had died" — and still did not let them go.
- EXOD 9:8-12** Plague 6 — Boils from soot. The magicians cannot appear before Moses because of their own boils. God hardening Pharaoh's heart (9:12).
- EXOD 9:13-35** Plague 7 — Hail and fire. "I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (9:16) — God's purpose in all the plagues stated. Those who feared God brought animals inside; those who didn't lost them.
- EXOD 10:1-20** Plague 8 — Locusts. Even Pharaoh's officials plead: "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go!" Pharaoh negotiates only men can go; Moses refuses. Locusts cover the ground; "Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt."
- EXOD 10:21-29** Plague 9 — Three days of thick darkness "that could be felt." Ra/Amon-Ra (sun god) judged. Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh threatens Moses' life.
- EXOD 11:1-8; 12:29-30** Plague 10 — Death of all firstborn, from Pharaoh's son to prisoner's to firstborn of livestock. "There was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead." At midnight Pharaoh summons Moses: "Up! Leave!"

The Passover — Institution of the Feast

God's foundational redemptive ordinance — the lamb, the blood, the unleavened bread — pointing ultimately to Christ (1 Cor 5:7).

- EXOD 12:1-6** On the 10th of Nisan: select a year-old male lamb without defect; keep until the 14th; slaughter at twilight.
- EXOD 12:7,13** Apply blood to the doorposts and lintel with hyssop. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." — substitution and protection through blood.
- EXOD 12:11-13** "Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover." The destroyer will not touch any house marked with blood. Atonement through substitution.
- EXOD 12:14** "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD — a lasting ordinance." Still observed 3,500 years later.

The Exodus; Crossing the Red Sea; Song of Moses

The great departure; the trap at the sea; the miracle; the song of triumph — the defining event of Israel's identity.

- EXOD 12:37-38** About 600,000 men on foot plus women and children — plus a mixed multitude of foreigners (12:38). They have been in Egypt 430 years to the day (12:40–41).
- EXOD 13:21-22** The LORD goes ahead — pillar of cloud by day; pillar of fire by night. Neither leaves them.
- EXOD 14:13-14** Moses: “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today... The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”
- EXOD 14:21-22** Moses stretches his hand; the LORD drives back the sea with a strong east wind all night. Israel walks on dry ground; walls of water on their right and left.
- EXOD 14:27-28** Moses stretches his hand; the sea returns at daybreak; the entire Egyptian army drowned. “Not one of them survived.”
- EXOD 15:1-18** The Song of the Sea — Israel's first great hymn: “I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.” The LORD reigns forever and ever (15:18).
- EXOD 15:20-21** Miriam the prophetess takes a tambourine; all the women follow with tambourines and dancing. Miriam leads the response.

Wilderness Provisions — Manna, Quail, Water from the Rock

Three months of testing; three miraculous provisions; Israel's pattern of grumbling against God's grace.

- EXOD 15:23-25** Marah — bitter water sweetened by a piece of wood. “I am the LORD who heals you” (Jehovah Rapha, 15:26). The bitter made sweet by the tree — a type of the cross.
- EXOD 16:2-4** Desert of Sin — Israel grumbles: “If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt!” God promises bread from heaven daily — testing whether they will walk in his instructions (16:4).
- EXOD 16:14-15** Morning: thin flakes like frost. “What is it?” (manna). Moses: “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.” Jesus: “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35), citing the manna.
- EXOD 16:31-35** Manna: white coriander seed, tasting like wafers made with honey. A jar preserved before the LORD in the Ark. Israel eats it 40 years until entering Canaan (16:35).
- EXOD 17:5-6** At Rephidim — no water. God: “Strike the rock at Horeb, and water will come out of it.” Water flows. Paul: “They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4).

Battle with Amalek; Moses' Intercessory Arms; Jethro's Counsel

Israel's first military battle; Moses' arms as the key to victory; Jethro's practical organizational wisdom.

- EXOD 17:10-13** As long as Moses' hands are raised, Israel prevails. Aaron and Hur hold up his arms until sunset. “Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.” Prayer and action together win the battle.
- EXOD 17:15-16** Moses builds an altar: “The LORD is my Banner” (Jehovah Nissi). “The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.” (Fulfilled under Saul: 1 Sam 15; David: 1 Sam 30.)
- EXOD 18:17-23** Jethro: “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out.” Advises appointing capable men as judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens. Moses does so — the first judicial system in Israel.

Mount Sinai — The Mosaic Covenant; The Ten Commandments

The most dramatic moment in Israel's history — God descends in fire, thunder, and smoke; the Decalogue spoken directly to the people.

- EXOD 19:5-6** “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession... you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” — Israel's covenantal identity.
- EXOD 19:16-19** 3rd day at Sinai: thunder, lightning, thick cloud, very loud trumpet blast — the mountain covered in smoke because the LORD descended in fire. “The whole mountain trembled violently.”
- EXOD 20:1-17** The Ten Commandments (Decalogue): (1) No other gods (20:3); (2) No idols (20:4–6); (3) Do not misuse God's name (20:7); (4) Remember the Sabbath (20:8–11); (5) Honor father and mother (20:12); (6) Do not murder (20:13); (7) Do not commit adultery (20:14); (8) Do not steal (20:15); (9) No false testimony (20:16); (10) Do not covet (20:17).
- EXOD 20:18-19** People stand far off trembling. “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.” — they cannot stand unmediated divine presence. Moses the mediator.

The Book of the Covenant; Covenant Ratification with Blood

Civil and ceremonial law; the 70 elders see God and eat with Him; Moses ascends for 40 days.

- EXOD 20:22-23:33** The Book of the Covenant: altar law (20:24–26), servants/slavery (21:1–11), personal injury (21:12–36), property (22:1–15), social duties (22:16–23:9), Sabbath and feasts (23:10–19), the angel to lead them (23:20–33).
- EXOD 24:7-8** Moses reads the Book; people: “We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey.” Moses sprinkles blood: “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you.” (Jesus echoes this at the Last Supper: “This is my blood of the covenant,” Matt 26:28 .)
- EXOD 24:9-11** Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 elders ascend; “they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli... they ate and drank.” Extraordinary communion meal with God.
- EXOD 24:17-18** The glory of the LORD “like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain.” Moses enters the cloud for 40 days and 40 nights.

The Tabernacle — Blueprint from God; The Ark; The Menorah

Seven chapters of divine architectural blueprints for Israel's portable sanctuary — the place where heaven meets earth.

- EXOD 25:10-22** The Ark of the Covenant: acacia wood, gold-overlaid, 2.5×1.5×1.5 cubits; poles for carrying; the mercy seat (kapporeth/atonement cover) with two golden cherubim. “There I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites” (25:22).
- EXOD 25:31-40** The Golden Lampstand (Menorah): one piece of hammered gold; center shaft and 6 branches; almond blossom design. Seven lamps “must be kept burning continually” (27:20). Zechariah's vision (Zech 4); the seven churches (Rev 1 –3).
- EXOD 26:31-35** The inner curtain (veil) between the Holy Place and Holy of Holies — torn in two at Christ's death (Matt 27:51).
- EXOD 30:1-10** The Altar of Incense (golden altar): before the veil. Aaron burns incense every morning and evening — “a fragrant offering before the LORD throughout your generations.”
- EXOD 31:2-5** Bezalel and Oholiab: filled with the Spirit of God “in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship” — the first people in Scripture described as Spirit-filled for artistic work.
- EXOD 40:34-38** “The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it.” The Shekinah glory descends. Israel moves when the cloud lifts; stays when it settles.

The Golden Calf — Covenant Broken; Moses Intercedes; Covenant Renewed

The catastrophic sin at Sinai while Moses is on the mountain; God's self-revelation as compassionate; covenant renewed.

- EXOD 32:1-4** "Moses has been gone 40 days — make us gods." Aaron collects gold earrings; fashions a calf; "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."
- EXOD 32:11-14** Moses intercedes: "Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel..." The LORD relents from the disaster He planned. The power of covenant-based intercession.
- EXOD 32:19-20** Moses descends; sees the calf and dancing; smashes the tablets; grinds the calf to powder; makes Israel drink the powder-mixed water.
- EXOD 32:25-28** "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." The Levites rally; execute 3,000 that day. The sword of the covenant has two edges.
- EXOD 33:11** "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend." — the unique intimacy of Moses' relationship.
- EXOD 34:6-7** The LORD proclaims His name: "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished." — the most quoted description of God in the OT, echoed 6+ times in other books.
- EXOD 34:29-35** Moses descends; his face radiant — he doesn't know it. People afraid to approach. He wears a veil when speaking to people; removes it to speak with God and when relaying God's word.

Levitical Sacrifices; Ordination of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu

Five sacrifice types instituted; Aaron and his sons ordained; tragedy on the first day of service.

- LEV 1:1-17** Burnt offering (Olah) — entirely consumed; voluntary; expresses total consecration to God.
- LEV 2:1-16** Grain offering (Minchah) — fine flour, oil, incense; no yeast or honey; salt required; thanksgiving.
- LEV 3:1-17** Peace/Fellowship offering (Shelamim) — shared between God, priests, and worshiper; communion meal.
- LEV 4:1-5:13** Sin offering (Chattat) — for unintentional sins; blood applied to altar horns for priests (4:3), community (4:13), leader (4:22), individual (4:27).
- LEV 5:14-6:7** Guilt offering (Asham) — for specific wrongs requiring restitution: holy things, false oaths, fraud. Restitution plus 20% required alongside the offering.
- LEV 16:1-34** Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): once a year, Aaron enters the Holy of Holies with incense cloud and blood. Two goats: one as sin offering for atonement; the scapegoat has Israel's sins confessed over it and is driven into the wilderness. "Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites" (16:34).
- LEV 9:23-24** Aaron blesses the people; the glory of the LORD appears; fire from the LORD consumes the burnt offering. The people shout and fall facedown.
- LEV 10:1-3** Nadab and Abihu offer "unauthorized fire before the LORD." Fire from the LORD devours them. Moses: "Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be glorified." — the holiness of God is not negotiable.

Holiness Code — Clean Laws, Feasts, Sabbath Year, Jubilee

The comprehensive legislation for Israel's holy life — diet, purity, calendar, ethics, and land use.

- LEV 11:44-45** “Be holy because I am holy.” — the repeated refrain of Leviticus (also 19:2; 20:7,26). Peter applies it to Christians (1 Pet 1:15-16).
- LEV 17:11** “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.” — the theological heart of the entire sacrificial system.
- LEV 19:18** “Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.” — cited by Jesus as the second greatest commandment (Matt 22:39); Paul calls it the summary of the law (Gal 5:14 ; Rom 13:9).
- LEV 23:1-44** Seven feasts (moedim = “appointed times”): Passover (23:5); Unleavened Bread (23:6–8); Firstfruits (23:9–14); Weeks/Pentecost (23:15–22); Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah (23:23–25); Day of Atonement (23:26–32); Tabernacles/Sukkot (23:33–43). A prophetic calendar of redemption fulfilled by Christ.
- LEV 25:8-17** The Year of Jubilee (every 50th year): “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants” (25:10) — inscribed on the Liberty Bell. Slaves freed; land returned to original families; debts released. Jesus quotes Isa 61:1 (based on the Jubilee) to define His mission (Luke 4:18-19).

The Twelve Spies — Israel Refuses to Enter Canaan; 40-Year Sentence

The great crisis of faith — two spies vs. ten; the sentence that keeps an entire generation out of the Promised Land.

- NUM 13:27-29** Ten spies' report: “It does flow with milk and honey!... But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there.”
- NUM 13:30** Caleb: “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” — the minority report of faith.
- NUM 13:32-33** “We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” — the self-perception of fear; it controls how others perceive you.
- NUM 14:6-9** Joshua and Caleb tear their clothes: “Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”
- NUM 14:20-23** God forgives but decrees: “Not one of them will ever see the land... not one of them who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness... not one will enter the Promised Land.” Only Caleb and Joshua will enter.
- NUM 14:34** “For forty years — one year for each of the forty days you explored the land — you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.” One year per day — divine equivalence.

Forty Years Wandering — Korah’s Rebellion; Bronze Serpent; Balaam

Four decades of wandering marked by rebellion, judgment, and God’s unbroken commitment to the covenant.

- NUM 16:1-35** Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 leaders: “All the community is holy... Why do you set yourselves above the LORD’s assembly?” The ground opens and swallows Korah and his followers; fire consumes the 250 incense-burners.
- NUM 17:8-10** Aaron’s staff buds, blossoms, and produces almonds overnight — confirming God’s choice of Aaron. Preserved in the Ark as a sign.
- NUM 20:8-12** Moses strikes the rock twice in anger instead of speaking to it as commanded. God: “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy... you will not bring this community into the land.” Moses’ great disqualification — disobedience born of anger.
- NUM 21:8-9** Bronze serpent on a pole: look and live. Jesus: “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him” (John 3:14-15).
- NUM 22:28-30** Balaam’s donkey speaks: “What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?” Balaam: “You have made a fool of me!” Donkey: “Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?” He concedes: “No.”
- NUM 24:17** Balaam’s oracle: “A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” — Messianic prophecy; the Magi may have known this (Matt 2:2).

Moses’ Final Addresses — The Book of Deuteronomy

Moses’ farewell sermons on the plains of Moab — the law reviewed, the Shema given, blessings and curses laid out, Moses dies on Nebo.

- DEUT 6:4-9** The Shema: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Bind them on your hands (tefillin), write on doorposts (mezuzah), teach to children. Jesus calls this the greatest commandment (Matt 22:37-38).
- DEUT 18:15-19** “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you... You must listen to him.” — the great Mosaic prophecy; Peter applies it to Christ (Acts 3:22).
- DEUT 28:1-14** Blessings for obedience: blessed in city and country; your basket and kneading trough; your children, crops, livestock; the LORD will establish you as his holy people; rain in season; lend to many nations, borrow from none.
- DEUT 28:15-68** Curses for disobedience — 53 verses of curses including drought, disease, military defeat, madness, blindness, and ultimately: “The LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.” — a prophetic preview of Israel’s history.
- DEUT 30:6** “The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.” — the promise of the New Covenant heart transformation (cf. Jer 31:31-34 ; Ezek 36:26-27).
- DEUT 34:5-7** Moses dies on Mount Nebo at 120; “his eyes were not weak nor his vigor gone.” God buries him; no one knows where his grave is. Jude 9 : Michael the archangel disputes with Satan over Moses’ body.
- DEUT 34:10-12** “Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.” — the capstone epitaph of the Pentateuch.

The Conquest of Canaan

C. 1406 – 1380 BC

C. 1406 BC *Josh 1:1-2:24*

Joshua Commissioned; Rahab Hides the Spies

God commissions Joshua with the command “Be strong and courageous” (four times); a Gentile prostitute becomes a heroine of faith.

- JOSH 1:2-5** God: “Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan... I will give you every place where you set your foot... No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.”
- JOSH 1:8** “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night... Then you will be prosperous and successful.” — the first command in Joshua; the key to all that follows.
- JOSH 2:9-11** Rahab’s confession: “I know that the LORD has given you this land... We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you... for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.” A Gentile’s remarkable profession of faith.
- JOSH 2:18-21** The spies promise safety for Rahab’s household if she hangs a scarlet cord in her window. A parallel to the Passover blood on the doorpost. Rahab is in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:5).

C. 1406 BC *Josh 3:1-5:12*

Crossing the Jordan; Circumcision; Passover in Canaan; Manna Ceases

A second Red Sea miracle; covenant renewal through circumcision; first Passover in the land; the 40-year provision ends.

- JOSH 3:13-16** The moment priests’ feet touch the Jordan at flood stage: water piles up upstream; dry riverbed exposed. Israel crosses opposite Jericho. A second exodus-miracle.
- JOSH 4:6-7** Twelve stones from the Jordan bed set up at Gilgal: “In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them...” — faith transmitted through monuments and stories.
- JOSH 5:9** “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” Gilgal = rolling. The shame of slavery ended here.
- JOSH 5:11-12** Day after Passover in Canaan, they eat the produce of the land. The manna stops on that exact day. 40 years of supernatural provision ends the moment natural provision is available.

C. 1406 BC *Josh 6:1-27*

The Fall of Jericho — Walls Collapse; Rahab Spared

The most unconventional military strategy in Scripture — obedience, not tactics, wins the battle.

- JOSH 6:1-5** Jericho “tightly shut up because of the Israelites.” God’s strategy: march around once daily for 6 days; on the 7th day march 7 times; priests blow trumpets; people shout.
- JOSH 6:15-16** Day 7: rise at dawn; 7 circuits. On the 7th circuit Joshua commands: “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!”
- JOSH 6:20** “At the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.” Faith — obedience — miracle. No siege engines required.
- JOSH 6:22-25** Rahab and her household spared as promised. The scarlet cord still in her window (6:25).

C. 1406 BC STANDARD EVENT *Josh 7:1-8:35*

Achan's Sin; Defeat and Victory at Ai; Covenant Renewal at Ebal

Corporate consequences of individual sin; confession restores the covenant; the law publicly recited in the land.

- JOSH 7:10-12** God: "Israel has sinned... they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction."
- JOSH 7:20-21** Achan confesses: "I saw a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold... I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent." The order: saw → coveted → took → hid (cf. Eve in Gen 3:6).
- JOSH 8:30-35** Joshua builds an altar on Mount Ebal; writes the law on stones; reads all the blessings and curses to the entire assembly — men, women, children, and resident foreigners. Standing between Gerizim and Ebal — the geographic heart of Canaan.

C. 1405 BC STANDARD EVENT *Josh 9:1-12:24*

Southern Campaign — Sun Stands Still; Northern Campaign

The Gibeonite deception; hailstones from heaven; the sun standing still; 31 kings defeated in two campaigns.

- JOSH 9:14-15** "The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD." Made a peace treaty — soon discovered as deception. The danger of acting without prayer.
- JOSH 10:11** The LORD hurls large hailstones on the fleeing Amorites. "More of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites."
- JOSH 10:12-14** "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon." The sun stops; the moon halts. "There has never been a day like it before or since, when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!"
- JOSH 11:15** "As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses."
- JOSH 12:7-24** 31 kings defeated in total — from Jericho to the Lebanon mountain range. The systematic, thorough conquest of the land.

C. 1400 BC STANDARD EVENT *Josh 13:1-22:34*

Land Divided Among the Tribes; Caleb's Claim; Cities of Refuge

The fulfilment of the promise — land allocated by lot; Caleb at 85 still claiming his inheritance; cities of refuge for manslaughter.

- JOSH 14:10-12** Caleb at 85: "The LORD has kept me alive, as he promised, these forty-five years... I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me." Faith that does not age.
- JOSH 20:1-3** Six cities of refuge designated: Kedesh, Shechem, Kiriath Arba, Bezer, Ramoth, Golan — three on each side of the Jordan for accidental manslaughter, protecting from blood vengeance until a fair trial.
- JOSH 21:43-45** "The LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there... Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled." — the great declaration of God's faithfulness.

Joshua's Farewell; Covenant at Shechem; Joshua Dies at 110

Two final addresses; the great covenant renewal; the death of the last eyewitness of the Exodus generation.

- JOSH 23:11-13** “Be very careful to love the LORD your God... if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations... they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land.” — a precise prophecy of the Judges period.
- JOSH 24:14-15** “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” — the text that has adorned more household decorations than any other in Scripture.
- JOSH 24:26-27** Joshua writes in the Book of the Law; sets up a large stone: “This stone... has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.”
- JOSH 24:32** Joseph’s bones, carried 400 years from Egypt, buried at Shechem in the field Jacob had bought. 430 years after the promise, the promise kept.

The Period of the Judges

C. 1380 – 1050 BC

JUDG 2:11-19 STANDARD EVENT *Judg 2:11-19*

The Judges Cycle — Sin, Servitude, Supplication, Salvation

The theological framework of the entire book — repeated apostasy descending in a spiral.

- JUDG 2:11-13** Israel forsakes the LORD and serves the Baals. The anger of the LORD burns.
- JUDG 2:14-16** God gives them into the hands of raiders. They are in great distress. The LORD raises up judges who save them.
- JUDG 2:18-19** “Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them... But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors.” Each cycle worse than the last.

C. 1374–1334 BC STANDARD EVENT *Judg 3:7-31*

Othniel; Ehud’s Left-Handed Assassination; Shamgar

The first three judges — the model cycle, a clever assassination, and a one-verse hero.

- JUDG 3:9-11** Othniel (Caleb’s nephew): Spirit of the LORD comes on him; defeats Cushan-Rishathaim of Mesopotamia. 40 years of rest.
- JUDG 3:15-22** Ehud — left-handed Benjaminite; makes an 18-inch double-edged sword, straps to right thigh. Brings tribute to Eglon (“a very fat man”). Sends attendants away: “I have a secret message for you, O king.” Drives the sword in; fat closes over it; he exits through the porch and locks the doors.
- JUDG 3:28-30** Ehud leads Israel to seize the Jordan fords. 10,000 Moabites killed — “all vigorous and strong, not one escaped.” 80 years of rest.
- JUDG 3:31** Shamgar kills 600 Philistines with an ox goad. The entire account in one verse.

C. 1209–1169 BC STANDARD EVENT *Judg 4:1-5:31*

Deborah and Barak; Jael Kills Sisera; Song of Deborah

Two heroic women — the prophetess-judge and the tent-dwelling assassin — take center stage.

- JUDG 4:4-8** Deborah the prophetess holds court under the Palm of Deborah. She summons Barak to battle Sisera’s 900 iron chariots. Barak: “If you go with me, I will go; if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” Deborah: “The honor will not be yours — the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.”
- JUDG 4:14-16** “The LORD has given Sisera into your hands.” Barak charges down Tabor; the LORD routes Sisera — all his troops killed by the sword. Sisera flees on foot.
- JUDG 4:18-21** Jael gives Sisera milk and covers him. While he sleeps she takes a tent peg and a hammer — drives the peg through his temple into the ground. He dies.
- JUDG 5:1-31** The Song of Deborah — one of the oldest Hebrew poems; celebrates the victory, curses Meroz for failing to help, blesses Jael above all women. Note the irony: Sisera’s mother peers out the window expecting her son’s triumphal return (5:28–30) while he lies dead in a tent.

Gideon's 300 — Defeating 135,000 Midianites

God whittles an army from 32,000 to 300 to make clear that victory comes from Him alone.

- JUDG 6:11-16** Angel of the LORD appears to Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress (hiding from Midianites): “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” Gideon: “If the LORD is with us, why has all this happened?” Called despite his doubt.
- JUDG 6:36-40** The fleece test — twice. Wet fleece, dry ground (first); dry fleece, wet ground (second). Gideon’s faith requires confirmation signs. God accommodates his weakness without commending it.
- JUDG 7:2-7** 32,000 men → 22,000 leave (fearful). Still too many. The drinking test: 300 lap like dogs (hands to mouth, staying alert); 9,700 kneel. God chooses the 300 who drank with their heads up — watchful even while drinking.
- JUDG 7:16-22** Empty jars with torches inside; trumpets. Night attack: shatter jars, hold torches, blow trumpets — “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” The Midianites turn on each other in panic and flee. 135,000 enemy dead.
- JUDG 8:22-23** “The Israelites said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us — you, your son and your grandson.’ But Gideon told them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you.’” — the correct theocratic answer.

Samson — Nazirite, Judge, and Tragic Anti-Hero

The most complex judge — miraculous birth, supernatural strength, catastrophic weakness, and a final act of self-sacrifice that saves Israel.

- JUDG 13:3-5** Angel of the LORD: “You will conceive and give birth to a son... He is to be a Nazirite dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”
- JUDG 14:5-6** Samson tears a lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. He tells no one.
- JUDG 15:14-15** Spirit of the LORD rushes on him; ropes fall like charred flax. He grabs a donkey’s jawbone; kills 1,000 Philistines. “With a donkey’s jawbone I have made donkeys of them.”
- JUDG 16:4,17** Samson loves Delilah; she nags “day after day” until “he was tired to death” — and tells her his secret: “No razor has ever been used on my head, because I have been a Nazirite... If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me.”
- JUDG 16:21-22** Eyes gouged out; brought to Gaza; grinds grain in prison. “But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.” The grace that grows back in the darkness.
- JUDG 16:28-30** Samson prays: “Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more.” He pushes the two pillars. “Let me die with the Philistines!” The temple falls on 3,000. “He killed many more when he died than while he lived.”

Ruth and Boaz — Loyalty, Redemption, Lineage of David

A counter-narrative set in the same dark era — faithful love and the kinsman-redeemer as a type of Christ.

- RUTH 1:16-17** Ruth's declaration to Naomi: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried." — one of Scripture's most beautiful speeches of loyal love (hesed).
- RUTH 2:12** Boaz to Ruth: "May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." — the wings of the covenant God shelter the foreigner who comes in faith.
- RUTH 3:9** Ruth: "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer (go'el) of our family." The garment/wings imagery fulfilled in her request for covenant protection.
- RUTH 4:1-12** At the city gate with 10 elders: the nearer redeemer declines (removing his sandal — the legal transfer). Boaz publicly declares he is acquiring the land and Ruth as wife to "maintain the name of the dead with his property."
- RUTH 4:18-22** The genealogy: Perez → ... → Boaz → Obed → Jesse → David. Ruth the Moabite becomes an ancestor of Israel's greatest king — and of Jesus (Matt 1:5).

Samuel — Miraculous Birth; Call in the Night; Last Judge; Ark's Return

The pivotal figure — simultaneously last judge, first prophet, and kingmaker.

- 1 SAM 1:10-11** Hannah "prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly" and vows: if God gives her a son, she will give him to the LORD all his life; no razor shall touch his head (a Nazirite vow).
- 1 SAM 2:1-10** Hannah's Song — a forerunner of Mary's Magnificat: "My heart rejoices in the LORD... He raises the poor from the dust... The LORD will judge the ends of the earth." God is the reverser of fortunes.
- 1 SAM 3:3-10** The boy Samuel hears his name called three times, running to Eli each time. Eli instructs: "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" Samuel does so.
- 1 SAM 4:11** The Ark captured by Philistines; Hophni and Phinehas killed. Eli hears the news; falls backward from his chair; breaks his neck and dies. His daughter-in-law bears a son: "She named him Ichabod, saying, 'The glory has departed from Israel.'"
- 1 SAM 5:2-7** Ark placed in Dagon's temple at Ashdod; Dagon's statue falls on its face; next day its head and hands broken off on the threshold. Philistines afflicted with tumors wherever the Ark goes.
- 1 SAM 7:12** Samuel erects a stone after victory at Mizpah: "Ebenezer" — "Thus far the LORD has helped us." The name given to the stone the Philistines had called Ebenezer (4:1) when they defeated Israel — now the name reclaimed in victory.
- 1 SAM 8:6-9** Israel demands a king. God: "It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king... listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim." — God accommodates their desire while forecasting its consequences.

The United Kingdom

C. 1050 – 931 BC

C. 1050 BC *1 Sam 9:1-15:35*

Saul Anointed; Early Victories; Disobedience and Rejection

A tall, handsome Benjaminite anointed in secret, revealed publicly, succeeds brilliantly then fails fatally through presumption and disobedience.

- 1 SAM 9:2** Saul — “an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites — a head taller than any of the others.” His advantages: appearance, family, tribe. His weakness: insecurity beneath the impressive exterior.
- 1 SAM 10:1** Samuel takes a flask of olive oil; pours it on Saul’s head: “Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance?”
- 1 SAM 10:22** When presented by lot at Mizpah, Saul is found “hiding among the supplies.” His first act as king-elect: hiding. A character clue for all that follows.
- 1 SAM 13:13-14** Samuel after Saul’s presumptuous sacrifice: “Your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart.” — David’s appointment already announced before his birth (apparently).
- 1 SAM 15:22-23** “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.” — the prophetic reformation of the sacrificial system’s meaning.
- 1 SAM 15:35** “And Samuel did not go to see Saul again till the day of his death, though Samuel mourned for him.” — grief for what could have been.

C. 1025–1010 BC *1 Sam 16:1-27:12*

David — Anointed; Goliath; Jonathan’s Friendship; Years as a Fugitive

The shepherd-king’s formation — anointing, fame, friendship, flight, and faithfulness during a decade of persecution.

- 1 SAM 16:7** “People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” — the interpretive key to all of David’s story.
- 1 SAM 16:12-13** David anointed — “glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.” “The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on.” Same Spirit departs Saul (16:14).
- 1 SAM 17:45-47** “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty... the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.” Stone, sling, faith.
- 1 SAM 18:1-4** Jonathan’s covenant love: “Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.” Gives David his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt — his royal identity transferred in covenant friendship.
- 1 SAM 24:6** After cutting Saul’s robe in the cave: David’s heart “smote him.” “The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed, or lay my hand on him.” — David’s submission to God’s timing even when he could seize power.

Death of Saul and Jonathan at Gilboa; David's Lament

Saul's desperate final act; the battle of Gilboa; David's elegy — one of the most moving poems in all literature.

- 1 SAM 28:7-19** Saul in despair consults the medium at Endor; Samuel (or his shade) is called up: "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me." Saul collapses in terror.
- 1 SAM 31:4-6** Badly wounded, Saul asks his armor-bearer to run him through; he refuses. Saul falls on his own sword. His armor-bearer does the same. All four of Saul's sons dead; the battle lost.
- 2 SAM 1:19,25,27** David's elegy: "How the mighty have fallen!" — the refrain three times. "Saul and Jonathan — in life they were loved and admired, and in death they were not parted." The men of Jabesh-Gilead (whom Saul saved in his first act as king) risk everything to retrieve and bury the bodies — loyalty to the end.

David King Over Judah, Then All Israel; Jerusalem Made Capital

Seven years of civil war; David's house strengthens; Jerusalem captured and made the city of God.

- 2 SAM 2:1-4** David inquires of God; goes to Hebron; men of Judah anoint him king over Judah at age 30. He reigns in Hebron 7 years 6 months (5:5).
- 2 SAM 3:1** "The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker." — a summary with theological dimensions.
- 2 SAM 5:1-3** All the tribes: "We are your own flesh and blood... you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns... The LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'" United kingdom under David.
- 2 SAM 5:7-9** David captures the fortress of Zion — the City of David. Jerusalem becomes the new capital, replacing Hebron. Centrally located between north and south tribes — a political and theological genius move.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem; David Dances; Michal's Contempt

The Ark's journey to Jerusalem — one death, three months' delay, then joyful procession; worship that transcends dignity.

- 2 SAM 6:6-7** Uzzah reaches out to steady the Ark when the oxen stumble; God strikes him dead. "David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah." — holiness cannot be treated casually even with good intentions. God had specified Levites carry the Ark on poles (Num 4:15).
- 2 SAM 6:12-14** The Ark blessed Obed-Edom's house 3 months. David goes to bring it up "with rejoicing." He dances "with all his might" before the LORD — wearing only a linen ephod. Undignified by royal standards; wholly consecrated by worship standards.
- 2 SAM 6:20-23** Michal despises David for "uncovering himself" while dancing. David: "I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this... But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor." Michal remained childless to the day of her death — a sad ending.
- 1 CHR 16:8-36** David appoints Asaph and his company to minister before the Ark; gives them a song of praise — a psalm composite used in worship. "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name... Remember the wonders he has done." The beginning of organized Levitical worship music in Israel.

C. 1000 BC 2 Sam 7:1-29; 1 Chr 17:1-27

The Davidic Covenant — An Eternal Dynasty Promised

The most important covenant after Abraham's — God promises David a dynastic line that will never end; the Messianic foundation of the entire OT.

- 2 SAM 7:4-7** David wants to build God a house (Temple). God through Nathan: "Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day."
- 2 SAM 7:11-13** "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you... Your son... he will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." — God builds David's house; David cannot build God's. The reversal of grace.
- 2 SAM 7:14-16** "I will be his father, and he will be my son... But my love will never be taken away from him... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." — applied ultimately to Christ (Heb 1:5 ; Luke 1:32-33).
- 2 SAM 7:18-19** David's prayer in response: "Who am I, Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?... Is this your usual way of dealing with man, Sovereign LORD?" — overwhelmed by grace.

C. 1000 BC STANDARD EVENT 2 Sam 8:1-9:13; 1 Chr 18-20

David's Military Victories; Kindness to Mephibosheth

David's kingdom expands from Egypt to the Euphrates; David shows unprecedented covenant kindness to Jonathan's disabled son.

- 2 SAM 8:6,14** "The LORD gave David victory wherever he went." — seven times in chapters 8–10. Military dominance attributed entirely to God's enabling.
- 2 SAM 9:1-3** David: "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Mephibosheth found — Jonathan's son, crippled in both feet (from his nurse dropping him when news came of Saul's death, 4:4).
- 2 SAM 9:7** David: "Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." — a picture of grace: enemy made a son; the disqualified given a seat at the king's table.

C. 990 BC 2 Sam 11:1-12:25; Ps 51

David and Bathsheba; Nathan's Rebuke; David's Repentance

The darkest chapter in David's life — adultery, murder, cover-up; exposed by a prophet; the great penitential psalm.

- 2 SAM 11:1** "In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out... but David remained in Jerusalem." The first step of the fall: absence from duty.
- 2 SAM 11:2-5** David sees Bathsheba bathing; sends for her; she comes; she conceives. The sin in three words: saw, sent, lay.
- 2 SAM 11:14-17** Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) refuses to go home and enjoy comfort while Israel camps in the field. David arranges for him to be placed where the fighting is fiercest. Uriah dies. Murder added to adultery.
- 2 SAM 12:1-7** Nathan's parable of the rich man who takes the poor man's only ewe lamb. David's anger burns: "The man who did this must die!" Nathan: "You are the man!"
- 2 SAM 12:13-14** David: "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan: "The LORD has taken away your sin... But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die." The child dies 7 days later.
- PS 51:1-4** David's penitential psalm: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love... Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." — sin as primarily vertical, against God, even when it harms others.
- PS 51:10-12** "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation." — the great prayer for renewal.

Absalom's Rebellion; David Flees Jerusalem; Tragedy Resolved

The consequences of David's sin rippling through his family; the most painful chapter of his reign.

- 2 SAM 13:1-22** Amnon (David's firstborn) rapes his half-sister Tamar (Absalom's full sister). David is angry but does nothing. Absalom hates Amnon. Two years later, Absalom kills Amnon and flees to Geshur for 3 years.
- 2 SAM 15:1-6** Absalom "steals the hearts of the men of Israel" — sitting at the gate, touching and kissing whoever comes for judgment, saying "If only I were appointed judge..."
- 2 SAM 15:13-14** A messenger: "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." David flees Jerusalem barefoot and weeping with his head covered. The king of Israel a refugee from his own son.
- 2 SAM 18:14-15** Absalom caught by his hair in an oak tree while his mule rides on. Joab thrusts three javelins into him despite David's explicit orders to "deal gently with the young man Absalom."
- 2 SAM 18:33** "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you — O Absalom, my son, my son!" — perhaps the most anguished parental cry in Scripture.

Solomon's Reign — Wisdom, Temple, Wealth, and Decline

The golden age of Israel — wisdom beyond measure, the Temple built, universal fame — but the seeds of destruction sown through compromise.

- 1 KGS 2:1-4** David's charge to Solomon: "Be strong, act like a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands... so that you may prosper in all you do."
- 1 KGS 3:5-9** God at Gibeon: "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon asks for "a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong." The most wisely phrased prayer in Scripture.
- 1 KGS 3:10-14** God pleased: "I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be." Also gives riches and honor and (conditionally) long life.
- 1 KGS 3:16-28** Solomon's first recorded judgment: two women, one dead baby, one living. "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." The true mother reveals herself by choosing her baby's life over her claim. "All Israel heard the verdict... they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice."
- 1 KGS 6:1** Temple construction begins in Solomon's 4th year (c. 966 BC), 480 years after the Exodus — a precise chronological marker.
- 1 KGS 6:7** "In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built." — silence as reverence; the instruments of war absent from the house of God.
- 1 KGS 8:10-13** At the Temple dedication: "When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple." — the Shekinah returns, now housed in stone.
- 1 KGS 8:27** Solomon's prayer: "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" — the greatest theological insight of Solomon's prayer.
- 1 KGS 10:1-9** The Queen of Sheba's visit: overwhelmed by his wisdom, the palace, food at his table, attendants' robes, his burnt offerings. "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes."
- 1 KGS 11:1-6** Solomon's fatal flaw: 700 wives of royal birth; 300 concubines. They turn his heart after other gods. He builds high places for Chemosh (Moab's god) and Molek (Ammon's god) on the hill east of Jerusalem. "So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD."
- 1 KGS 11:11-13** God: "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime."

Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon

COMPOSED ACROSS C. 1440 – 931 BC

C. 1440–400 BC *Ps 1-150*

The Book of Psalms — 150 Songs of Israel's Worship

The hymnal of Scripture — 150 poems covering every human emotion. Authors: David (73), Asaph (12), Sons of Korah (11), Solomon (2), Moses (1), Ethan (1), Heman (1), anonymous (49). Arranged in five books mirroring the five books of Moses.

- PS 1:1-3** The Two Ways Psalm — the entrance gate to the Psalter: blessed is the one who meditates on the law day and night; “that person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season.”
- PS 2:1-2,7-9** The Royal/Messianic Psalm: “Why do the nations conspire?... The LORD says to me, ‘You are my son; today I have become your father.’” — applied to Christ’s resurrection (Acts 13:33) and His return (Rev 19:15).
- PS 22:1-2,14-18** Prophetic Passion Psalm: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Jesus’ cry, Matt 27:46). “They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment” (22:18) — fulfilled at the crucifixion (John 19:24).
- PS 23:1-6** “The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing... Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil... Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” — the world’s best-known poem.
- PS 32:1-2** “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them.” — Paul quotes this to define justification (Rom 4:7-8).
- PS 46:1-3** “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.” — Luther’s inspiration for “A Mighty Fortress.”
- PS 51:1-17** The great penitential psalm of David after Bathsheba: “Create in me a pure heart... restore to me the joy of your salvation.” “You do not delight in sacrifice... My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise” (51:16-17).
- PS 78:1-72** Asaph’s historical psalm — Israel’s history as a lesson for the next generation. “We will not hide them from their descendants... so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born” (78:4). Teaching history as theology.
- PS 90:1-17** Moses’ prayer — the only Mosaic psalm: “Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations... A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by.” “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (90:12).
- PS 110:1,4** “The LORD says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’... ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’” — the most quoted OT psalm in the NT; entirely Messianic.
- PS 119:1-176** The Great Torah Psalm — longest chapter in the Bible; 176 verses; 22 stanzas, each stanza using a letter of the Hebrew alphabet; every verse mentions God’s word in some form. “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (119:105).
- PS 137:1-4** The Exile Psalm: “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion... How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?” — composed during the Babylonian exile.

The Book of Proverbs — Wisdom for Everyday Life

Israel's wisdom literature — primarily Solomon's, with contributions from Agur and Lemuel's mother. Practical theology for all of life.

- PROV 1:1-7** “The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel — for gaining wisdom and instruction... The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (1:7) — the epistemological foundation of all biblical wisdom.
- PROV 3:5-6** “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” — possibly the most memorized verse in Proverbs.
- PROV 8:22-31** Wisdom personified (Lady Wisdom) speaks of her existence before creation: “I was there when he set the heavens in place... I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing before him always... delighting in the human race.” — some read this as a pre-incarnate portrait of Christ (cf. Col 2:3 ; John 1:1-3).
- PROV 22:6** “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” — one of Proverbs' most cited child-rearing texts.
- PROV 31:10-31** The Valorous Woman (Eshet Chayil) — an acrostic poem in 22 verses; one letter for each Hebrew letter. A portrait of the woman who fears the LORD at work in every domain of life. Often recited by Jewish husbands to their wives on the Sabbath.

Ecclesiastes — Vanity and the Fear of God

The Teacher (Qohelet = “the Gatherer”) — Solomon reflecting on a life that experimented with wisdom, pleasure, work, and wealth to find meaning. His conclusion: fear God.

- ECCL 1:2** “‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ says the Teacher. ‘Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.’” — the opening provocation; “meaningless” (hebel = vapor/breath) used 38 times.
- ECCL 2:11** “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.” — the conclusion after trying everything.
- ECCL 3:1-8** “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die... a time to mourn and a time to dance... a time for war and a time for peace.” — the poem of life's rhythm.
- ECCL 3:11** “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” — the God-shaped vacuum in every human soul.
- ECCL 12:13-14** “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.” — the entire book distilled into two verses.

Song of Solomon — Sacred Love Poetry

Eight chapters of lyrical love poetry between a king and his beloved — affirming the goodness of human sexuality within marriage; traditionally read as an allegory of God’s love for Israel or Christ’s love for the Church.

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| SONG 1:1 | “Solomon’s Song of Songs” — the superlative title (Song of Songs = the most excellent song, as King of kings, Lord of lords). |
| SONG 2:3-4 | “Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love.” |
| SONG 2:10-13 | “My beloved spoke and said to me, ‘Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing birds has come.’” — a call into presence, read as God’s call to the soul. |
| SONG 8:6-7 | “Place me like a seal over your heart... for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave... Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned.” — the climactic statement on the nature of love in all Scripture. |

The Divided Kingdom

931 – 586 BC

931 BC 1 Kgs 12:1-33; 2 Chr 10

The Kingdom Splits — Israel (North) and Judah (South)

Solomon's son Rehoboam refuses to lighten the people's burden; the ten northern tribes revolt — the nation never reunites.

- 1 KGS 12:3-4** Jeroboam and the assembly appeal: "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."
- 1 KGS 12:10-11** Young advisors' counsel: "Tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist... My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'" — arrogance accelerating the fracture.
- 1 KGS 12:16** "When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king: 'What share do we have in David?... To your tents, Israel!'" — the rebellion cry echoing 2 Sam 20:1.
- 1 KGS 12:25-33** Jeroboam's catastrophic decision: two golden calves at Bethel and Dan. "Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt!" — deliberately echoing Aaron's words (Exod 32:4). He creates his own priesthood, feasts, and calendar. "This thing became a sin" — the phrase the book of Kings repeats for every northern king.

875–850 BC 1 Kgs 17-19; 21; 2 Kgs 1-2

Elijah the Prophet — Drought, Fire from Heaven, Still Small Voice

The fiercest prophet of the northern kingdom — called to confront Ahab and Jezebel's Baal-worshipping regime.

- 1 KGS 17:1** Elijah appears without introduction: "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." — the first word of the greatest prophet since Moses.
- 1 KGS 17:6** Ravens bring Elijah bread and meat morning and evening by the Kerith Ravine. God provides through unconventional means.
- 1 KGS 17:13-16** The widow of Zarephath's last meal: her jar of flour never runs out; her jug of oil never runs dry — "in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah." Then her son dies and Elijah raises him (17:21-22) — the first resurrection in Scripture.
- 1 KGS 18:21** "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." The people said nothing — silence as an indictment.
- 1 KGS 18:36-38** Elijah's prayer on Carmel: "LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command." Fire falls; consumes the offering, wood, stones, soil, and water in the trench. 450 Baal prophets executed at the Kishon.
- 1 KGS 19:3-4** Jezebel threatens his life; "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life." He sits under a broom tree: "I have had enough, LORD. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." — even the greatest can collapse into depression after victory.
- 1 KGS 19:11-12** At Horeb: a great wind shattering rocks — not in the wind; earthquake — not in the earthquake; fire — not in the fire. "And after the fire came a gentle whisper" (still small voice). God speaks in the quiet, not the spectacular.
- 1 KGS 21:1-19** Naboth's vineyard: Ahab covets it; Jezebel arranges false charges; Naboth stoned; Ahab takes the vineyard. Elijah: "In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood." Fulfilled precisely (22:38).
- 2 KGS 2:11-12** Elijah taken up to heaven in a whirlwind; a chariot of fire and horses of fire appear. Elisha sees and cries: "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" — the chariot of Israel = the true defense of the nation. Elisha picks up Elijah's cloak.

Elisha's Ministry — Double Portion; Miracles; Naaman Healed

Elisha performs twice as many recorded miracles as Elijah — a prophetic ministry of grace and power.

- 2 KGS 2:9** Elisha's request: "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." Elijah: "You have asked a difficult thing... yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours." Elisha sees — and receives.
- 2 KGS 4:1-7** A widow's oil multiplied — fills every jar she can borrow; the oil stops when the jars are full. She sells it; pays debts; lives on the rest.
- 2 KGS 4:32-37** The Shunammite's son raised: Elisha lies on the child, eye to eye, mouth to mouth, hands to hands — the child sneezes 7 times and opens his eyes. Second OT resurrection.
- 2 KGS 5:10-14** Naaman the Syrian general comes with horses and chariots expecting a dramatic healing. Elisha sends a messenger: "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan." Naaman is furious — expects a display, not a dip. His servants persuade him. "His flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy." Jesus cites this as a type of grace to Gentiles (Luke 4:27).
- 2 KGS 6:15-17** Elisha's servant sees the Syrian army surrounding them and panics. Elisha: "Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." He prays; the servant's eyes opened — the hills full of horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha.
- 2 KGS 13:20-21** Even dead: a man thrown into Elisha's tomb touches his bones and revives. Power beyond the grave — a sign of the resurrection to come.

Joel — Locust Plague and the Day of the LORD; Promise of the Spirit

A locust plague as the occasion for a call to repentance and a vision of the eschatological Day of the LORD — and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh.

- JOEL 1:4** "What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten." — four waves of total destruction.
- JOEL 2:12-13** "'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love." — quoting Exod 34:6-7 .
- JOEL 2:28-29** "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." — quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21) as fulfilled.
- JOEL 2:32** "And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." — Paul quotes this (Rom 10:13) as the universal basis of salvation.
- JOEL 3:14** "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision." — "valley of decision" describes the eschatological judgment of the nations.

Amos — Justice Like a River; The Plumb Line; Five Visions

A shepherd from Tekoa in Judah sent to preach to the prosperous, unjust northern kingdom — the first prophet whose words were gathered into a complete book.

- AMOS 1:1** “The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa — the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.” — precise historical anchoring.
- AMOS 2:6-7** “They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor... and deny justice to the oppressed.” — social injustice as covenant violation.
- AMOS 5:21-24** “I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me... Away with the noise of your songs!... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” — ritual worship without justice is rejected; social righteousness is what God desires.
- AMOS 7:7-8** The Plumb Line vision: the LORD standing by a wall with a plumb line — “I will spare them no longer.” The standard of God’s justice measuring Israel’s moral architecture.
- AMOS 7:14-15** Amos to Amaziah who tells him to stop prophesying: “I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’” — the reluctant prophet.
- AMOS 9:11-12** “In that day I will restore David’s fallen shelter... and rebuild it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name.” — quoted by James at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:16-17) as justification for Gentile inclusion.

Hosea — The Prophet’s Tragic Marriage; God’s Love for Faithless Israel

Hosea’s marriage to the unfaithful Gomer becomes a living parable of God’s covenantal love for adulterous Israel — the most intensely personal of all the prophetic books.

- HOS 1:2** “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD.” — the divine command that will cost Hosea enormously and reveal God’s heart.
- HOS 2:14-15** “Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her... There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.” — judgment as the prelude to restoration; the Valley of Trouble (Achor) becoming a door of hope.
- HOS 3:1-3** Hosea buys Gomer back — 15 shekels of silver plus barley — after she has fallen into slavery. “Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods.” — redemption of the unfaithful at personal cost.
- HOS 6:1-3** “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us... After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.” — repentance liturgy.
- HOS 6:6** “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.” — quoted by Jesus twice (Matt 9:13 ; 12:7) as the heart of Torah observance.
- HOS 11:1** “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” — Matthew quotes this as fulfilled in Jesus’ return from Egypt (Matt 2:15).
- HOS 14:4** “I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.” — the book closes with the promise of free grace.

Micah — Bethlehem Prophecy; What the LORD Requires

A rural Judean prophet contemporary with Isaiah — pronouncing judgment on corrupt rulers and false prophets while announcing the Messiah's birthplace.

- MIC 3:11** “Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the LORD’s support and say, ‘Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us.’” — complacent religion as cover for corruption.
- MIC 5:2** “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” — the Messianic birthplace prophecy quoted by the chief priests to Herod (Matt 2:5-6).
- MIC 6:8** “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” — the most elegant summary of ethical religion in the OT.
- MIC 7:18-19** “Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? ... You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” — the promise of God’s forgetting of sin.

Isaiah — Holy, Holy, Holy; The Servant Songs; Comfort My People

The greatest of the writing prophets — the “Fifth Gospel”; spanning judgment, consolation, the Suffering Servant, and new creation. Isaiah is the most quoted OT prophet in the NT.

- ISA 1:2-4** “Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth!... I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” — animals more loyal than God’s people.
- ISA 6:1-5** Isaiah’s call vision: “I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim... calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’” Doorposts shake; temple fills with smoke. Isaiah: “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips.”
- ISA 6:6-8** A seraph touches his lips with a live coal: “Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” God: “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah: “Here am I. Send me!” — the pattern of cleansing before commission.
- ISA 7:14** “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” — the sign given to Ahaz; fulfilled ultimately in the virgin birth (Matt 1:22-23).
- ISA 9:6-7** “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.”
- ISA 11:1-5** “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse... The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding... He will judge the needy with righteousness.” — the Davidic Messiah after the dynasty’s stump is felled.
- ISA 40:1-5** “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God... Prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” — the opening of the second section (Isa 40 –66); quoted in all four Gospels as fulfilled by John the Baptist.
- ISA 40:31** “But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”
- ISA 44:28; 45:1** God calls Cyrus by name 150+ years before his birth: “who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please’... ‘This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of...’” — the most specific predictive prophecy in the OT about a named individual.
- ISA 52:13-53:12** The Fourth Servant Song — the Suffering Servant: “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain... Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering... he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities... the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” — quoted more in the NT than any other OT passage; the most powerful Messianic prophecy.
- ISA 55:1** “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!... without money and without cost.” — the free grace of God’s invitation.
- ISA 65:17** “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.” — the ultimate eschatological vision (cf. Rev 21:1).

722 BC 2 Kgs 17:1-41

Fall of the Northern Kingdom — Assyrian Exile of the Ten Tribes

After 19 kings in 210 years — every one evil — the northern kingdom falls. The ten tribes are deported and scattered.

- 2 KGS 17:6** “In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.” — the climax of the northern kingdom’s history.
- 2 KGS 17:7-12** The reason: “All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt... They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of the nations...”
- 2 KGS 17:13-15** “The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: ‘Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands...’ But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the LORD their God.”
- 2 KGS 17:24-34** Foreigners resettled in Samaria; they fear the LORD but also serve their own gods. The origin of the Samaritan syncretism — “They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods.”

701 BC 2 Kgs 18:13-19:37; Isa 36-37

Sennacherib Invades Judah — Jerusalem Miraculously Delivered

Assyria takes 46 cities of Judah but cannot take Jerusalem — one of Scripture’s most dramatic displays of divine intervention.

- 2 KGS 18:4** Hezekiah’s reforms: removes high places, smashes sacred stones, cuts down Asherah poles, breaks up the bronze serpent Moses made (now burned incense to and called Nehushtan). Unprecedented Josiah-level reform.
- 2 KGS 18:28-35** The Rabshakeh mocks from the city wall in Hebrew (so all can hear): “Do not let Hezekiah mislead you... Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?... How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”
- 2 KGS 19:14-19** Hezekiah spreads Sennacherib’s letter before the LORD in the Temple: “LORD Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim... you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth... Now, LORD our God, deliver us... so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God.”
- 2 KGS 19:35** “That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning — there were all the dead bodies!” Sennacherib withdraws to Nineveh.
- 2 KGS 19:36-37** Sennacherib returns to Nineveh; murdered by his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer with a sword while worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok. Esarhaddon his son reigns.

663–612 BC Nah 1-3

Nahum — The Fall of Nineveh Announced

A century after Jonah’s mission to Nineveh, Nahum announces its coming destruction — Nineveh had returned to its wickedness. Fulfilled 612 BC.

- NAH 1:2-3** “The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath... The LORD is slow to anger but great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished.” — quoting and balancing Exod 34:6-7 .
- NAH 1:7** “The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.” — grace alongside judgment.
- NAH 2:1** “Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace!” — quoted in Isaiah 52:7 and applied to the gospel (Rom 10:15).
- NAH 3:1,18-19** “Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims!... Your shepherds slumber, king of Assyria; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them. Nothing can heal you; your wound is fatal.” — Nineveh falls 612 BC; its ruins were not rediscovered until 1820.

Zephaniah — The Day of the LORD; Judgment and Joy

A prophet of royal blood (descendant of Hezekiah) who preached during Josiah's reign — judgment on all nations culminating in universal joy.

- ZEPH 1:14-16** “The great day of the LORD is near — near and coming quickly. The cry on the day of the LORD is bitter; the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry. That day will be a day of wrath — a day of distress and anguish... a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.” — the inspiration for the medieval hymn *Dies Irae*.
- ZEPH 2:3** “Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.” — the remnant theme.
- ZEPH 3:17** “The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.” — one of the most tender descriptions of God in all Scripture.

Jeremiah — The Weeping Prophet; New Covenant Foretold

Called as a youth to prophesy for 40+ years through Judah's final days — the most emotionally transparent prophet; persecuted, imprisoned, and finally vindicated.

- JER 1:4-5** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” — the predestination of the prophet; the prevenient grace of God.
- JER 1:6-9** Jeremiah: “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” God touches his mouth: “I have put my words in your mouth.” — the second Moses in both calling and reluctance.
- JER 7:9-11** “Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal... and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, ‘We are safe’?... Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you?” — Jesus quotes this when cleansing the Temple (Matt 21:13).
- JER 17:9** “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” — the profound diagnosis of human nature that makes the New Covenant necessary.
- JER 20:7-9** Jeremiah's confession: “You deceived me, LORD, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed... So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. But if I say, ‘I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.” — the compulsion of the prophet.
- JER 29:11** “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” — written to exiles in Babylon; the most over-quoted yet under-contextualized promise in Jeremiah.
- JER 31:31-34** “The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts... I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” — the New Covenant prophecy; fulfilled in Christ (Heb 8:8-12 ; Luke 22:20).
- JER 32:6-9** Even as Jerusalem is besieged, Jeremiah buys a field at Anathoth — a prophetic act of faith in the future restoration: “Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land” (32:15).

Habakkuk — Why Does God Permit Evil? The Righteous Live by Faith

A unique book structured as a dialogue between the prophet and God — wrestling honestly with the problem of theodicy. Habakkuk questions; God answers; Habakkuk responds in faith.

- HAB 1:2-3** “How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?... Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.” — one of Scripture’s most honest cries.
- HAB 1:5-6** God’s answer: “Look at the nations and watch — and be utterly amazed... I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people.”
- HAB 1:13** Habakkuk’s second complaint: “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”
- HAB 2:4** “See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright — but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness.” — the text that transforms Paul’s theology (Rom 1:17 ; Gal 3:11 ; Heb 10:38). Perhaps the most theologically consequential single verse in the OT.
- HAB 2:14** “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” — Isaiah’s vision (Isa 11:9) expanded; the telos of all history.
- HAB 3:17-18** “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls — yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.” — faith completely unconditioned by circumstances; the summit of OT trust.

Josiah’s Reform — Discovery of the Book of the Law; Great Passover

The last great revival in Judah — the Bible rediscovered, the covenant renewed, the greatest Passover since Samuel’s day.

- 2 KGS 22:1-2** Josiah becomes king at 8. “He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.” — the highest commendation given to a king.
- 2 KGS 22:8-11** Hilkiah the priest finds the Book of the Law during Temple repairs. When Josiah hears it read, he tears his robes: “Great is the LORD’s anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book.” — the shocking discovery that the Scriptures had been lost.
- 2 KGS 22:14-20** The prophetess Huldah confirms the book’s divine authenticity. She prophesies judgment on Judah — but because of Josiah’s repentance, it will not come in his lifetime.
- 2 KGS 23:1-3** Josiah reads the entire Book of the Covenant publicly; all the people stand to renew the covenant.
- 2 KGS 23:4-20** The most sweeping reform: destroys articles made for Baal, Asherah, and starry hosts; burns the Asherah pole; deposes pagan priests; destroys high places including Tophet (where children were sacrificed to Molek); desecrates high places from Geba to Beersheba; fulfills Jeroboam’s prophecy by burning bones on Bethel’s altar (1 Kgs 13:2).
- 2 KGS 23:22-23** “Not since the days of the judges who led Israel, nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, had any such Passover been observed.” — the greatest Passover in 400 years.
- 2 KGS 23:25** “Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did — with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.” — and yet judgment still comes (23:26–27).
- 2 KGS 23:29-30** Josiah killed by Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo while trying to intercept him. The great reformer cut down in his prime — “All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.”

Obadiah — The Destruction of Edom Foretold

The shortest book in the OT — 21 verses pronouncing judgment on Edom (descendants of Esau) for gloating over Jerusalem's fall.

- OBAD 1:3-4** “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’ Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD.”
- OBAD 1:10-12** “Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever... You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction.” — the sin of Schadenfreude toward a sibling nation.
- OBAD 1:15** “The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.” — the lex talionis applied to nations.

Three Deportations; The Fall of Jerusalem and the First Temple

The catastrophe that had been prophesied for centuries finally arrives — Babylon destroys Jerusalem; Solomon's Temple burned; the exile begins.

- DAN 1:1-2** First deportation (605 BC): Nebuchadnezzar takes Daniel and other nobles to Babylon. “And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.” — the first transfer.
- 2 KGS 24:11-16** Second deportation (597 BC): Nebuchadnezzar personally besieges Jerusalem. Jehoiachin surrenders; 10,000 deported including Ezekiel, craftsmen, and fighting men. Only the poorest people of the land left.
- 2 KGS 25:1-7** Final siege (586 BC): Nebuchadnezzar lays siege for 18 months. Zedekiah flees; captured on the plains of Jericho. His sons killed before his eyes — the last thing he saw — then his own eyes gouged out; taken to Babylon in bronze shackles.
- 2 KGS 25:8-12** Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard: burns the Temple of the LORD, the royal palace, and all Jerusalem's notable buildings. The bronze pillars, the Sea, the movable stands — all carried to Babylon. The walls demolished. Most survivors deported; only the poorest left to tend vineyards and fields.
- 2 KGS 25:27-30** 37 years later: Evil-Merodach king of Babylon releases Jehoiachin from prison, speaks kindly to him, gives him a seat of honor and a regular allowance. The book ends on this note of grace — the Davidic line survives, even in exile.

The Book of Jonah

C. 785–750 BC · THE MISSION TO NINEVEH

JON 1:1-3 *Jon 1:1-3*

God's Call; Jonah Flees to Tarshish

The prophet refuses one of the clearest divine commissions in Scripture — and runs in the opposite direction. Tarshish is likely in Spain, the furthest known western point from Nineveh (in modern Iraq).

JON 1:1-2 “The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.’” — the same language used of Sodom (Gen 18:21). Nineveh was Assyria’s capital; the empire that would destroy the northern kingdom in 722 BC.

JON 1:3 “But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.” — three times “went down” in this passage (went down to Joppa; went down into the ship; went down into the hold) — the descent of disobedience.

JON 1:4-16 *Jon 1:4-16*

The Storm; Jonah Cast Overboard; The Pagan Sailors' Conversion

God pursues His fleeing prophet through a violent storm — and in the process, brings pagan sailors to genuine worship of the LORD.

JON 1:4 “Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.” — the cosmos itself mobilized against one man’s flight.

JON 1:5 The sailors are terrified; each cries out to his own god; they throw the cargo overboard. Jonah has gone below deck and fallen into a deep sleep. — the sleeping prophet while pagans pray; a painful irony.

JON 1:6 The captain goes to him: “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.” — a pagan sea captain issuing a prophetic command to the prophet of God.

JON 1:7-8 The sailors cast lots to determine who is responsible; the lot falls on Jonah. “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

JON 1:9 Jonah: “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” — the God he is fleeing from is the God who made the sea he is fleeing over. The irony is total.

JON 1:10-11 “This terrified them and they asked, ‘What have you done?’ (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, ‘What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?’”

JON 1:12 “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.” — Jonah’s first moment of integrity in the book; he accepts responsibility.

JON 1:13 Instead of immediately throwing him in, the men row hard to get back to land — and cannot. They try to save him. These “pagan” sailors are more merciful than Jonah was to Nineveh.

JON 1:14-15 They cry out to the LORD — using the covenant name YHWH: “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man’s life...” They throw Jonah overboard; the raging sea immediately grows calm.

JON 1:16 “At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.” — genuine conversion of pagan sailors, while God’s own prophet is in the sea. The first Gentile mission of the book, accomplished entirely without Jonah’s cooperation.

The Great Fish; Jonah's Prayer from the Depths

The most famous detail of Jonah — three days and three nights in the fish; a psalm of thanksgiving prayed from the belly of the deep.

- JON 1:17** “Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” — the fish is a divine provision, not a punishment. God provides the fish as Jonah would have drowned otherwise. Jesus cites this: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt 12:40).
- JON 2:1** “From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God.” — the first time Jonah speaks to God. In his extremity, he finally prays.
- JON 2:2** “He said: ‘In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.’” — the prayer uses the language of Sheol and the pit; it is a psalm of near-death.
- JON 2:3-6** “You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me... The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever.” — vivid near-drowning imagery.
- JON 2:7** “When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.” — memory of God at the edge of death.
- JON 2:8-9** “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the LORD.’” — irony: the man who fled God now preaches salvation from the LORD.
- JON 2:10** “And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.” — the LORD’s authority extends over creation’s creatures; the fish obeys more promptly than the prophet.

The Second Call; Jonah Preaches; Nineveh Repents

The greatest revival in the Old Testament — an entire city of 120,000 people turns from evil at the preaching of one reluctant prophet. Nothing like it before or after in Scripture.

- JON 3:1-2** “Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.’” — God gives the second chance Jonah himself will later begudge Nineveh.
- JON 3:3** “Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it.” — population estimate: 120,000 (4:11), likely including surrounding villages. One of the ancient world’s largest cities.
- JON 3:4** “Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, ‘Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.’” — the shortest, most terse, most apparently reluctant sermon in Scripture. Eight words in Hebrew. No altar call; no extended appeal; just the announcement.
- JON 3:5** “The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.” — immediate, total, cross-class repentance. “The Ninevites believed God” — faith as the first act.
- JON 3:6-9** When news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat down in the dust. He issued a royal decree: “Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”
- JON 3:10** “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.” — the most remarkable reprieve of a condemned city in Scripture. Jesus says “the men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here” (Matt 12:41).

Jonah's Anger; The Vine and the Worm; God's Final Question

The book's most penetrating section — the prophet furious at God's mercy; God's patient, probing response; the book ends with a question left unanswered, aimed at Jonah — and at every reader.

- JON 4:1** “But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.” — the revival was a success by every measure; and the prophet is furious. The most theologically shocking reaction to revival in all Scripture.
- JON 4:2** “He prayed to the LORD, ‘Isn’t this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.’” — Jonah knew God’s character all along and fled because he did not want Nineveh to benefit from it. He quoted Exod 34:6-7 as his reason for disobedience.
- JON 4:3** “Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” — the prophet who delivered the most successful revival in history now wishes for death because he is angry at God’s grace.
- JON 4:4** God’s first gentle question: “Is it right for you to be angry?” — God does not rebuke; He asks. The Socratic method in divine pastoral care.
- JON 4:5-8** Jonah sits east of the city in a shelter, waiting to see what will happen. God provides a plant (castor oil shrub) to shade Jonah — “and Jonah was very happy about the plant.” Then at dawn, a worm chews the plant; a scorching east wind blows; Jonah grows faint and again says it would be better to die.
- JON 4:9** God: “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” Jonah: “It is. And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.” — honest, ugly, petulant — and God still engages.
- JON 4:10-11** “But the LORD said, ‘You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left — and also many animals?’” — the book ends mid-conversation, with the question hanging. Jonah never answers. Neither does the reader escape the question: do you care more about your own comfort than God cares about the spiritually lost?

XI

ERA ELEVEN

The Babylonian Exile

605 – 538 BC

Daniel in Babylon — Refusing the King's Food; Interpreting Dreams

Four young Jewish nobles maintain covenant identity in the most powerful empire on earth — and God honors them with wisdom, miracles, and influence.

- DAN 1:3-8** Nebuchadnezzar selects young men from Judah's royal family for his court: good-looking, intelligent, educated, competent to serve. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah given Babylonian names. "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine." — the first boundary of conscience in the book.
- DAN 1:12-15** Daniel proposes a 10-day vegetable diet test. After 10 days: "they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food." God honors the principled stand.
- DAN 1:17,20** "To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds." When the king questioned them, "he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom."
- DAN 2:1-3** Nebuchadnezzar has a disturbing dream; demands his wise men tell him both the dream and its interpretation — on pain of death. None can. Daniel and his friends pray all night (2:18).
- DAN 2:31-35** The dream: a statue — head of gold (Babylon), chest/arms of silver (Medo-Persia), belly/thighs of bronze (Greece), legs of iron (Rome), feet of iron and clay (the end-time kingdom). A rock cut without hands strikes the feet; the whole statue collapses; the rock becomes a mountain filling the entire earth.
- DAN 2:44-45** "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed... It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever." — the stone is the kingdom of God/Christ that outlasts all human empires.
- DAN 3:1-6** Nebuchadnezzar builds a gold statue 90 feet tall; commands all officials to bow when they hear the music. "Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."
- DAN 3:16-18** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it... But even if he does not, we want you to know, King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." — the greatest statement of unconditional faith in the OT.
- DAN 3:25** Nebuchadnezzar: "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." — the pre-incarnate Christ present with His servants in the furnace.
- DAN 3:27** They come out: "The fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them."
- DAN 4:28-37** Nebuchadnezzar's pride: "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" A voice from heaven: he is driven from men, eats grass like cattle for 7 years, until he acknowledges God's sovereignty. "At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored." — the world's greatest king broken then restored by divine humbling.
- DAN 5:1-6** Belshazzar's feast: uses the sacred vessels from Jerusalem's Temple. A hand appears and writes on the wall: MENE MENE TEKEL PARSIN. The king's face turns pale; his knees knock; his legs give way.
- DAN 5:25-28** Daniel's interpretation: MENE — God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. TEKEL — you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. PARSIN — your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.
- DAN 5:30-31** "That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom." — fulfilled the night of the feast.
- DAN 6:10-12** Under Darius, a decree forbids prayer to any god or human except the king for 30 days. "But when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." — the same prayer routine; unchanged because of the decree.

DAN 6:22-23 Daniel from the lions' den: "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight." Brought up unharmed — "no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God."

605–530 BC *Dan 7-12*

Daniel's Visions — Four Beasts; Son of Man; Seventy Weeks

The apocalyptic section of Daniel — four world empires as beasts; the eternal kingdom given to the Son of Man; the 70 weeks of years; the end times.

DAN 7:3-7 Four great beasts: lion with eagle's wings (Babylon); bear raised on one side, ribs in its mouth (Medo-Persia); leopard with four wings and four heads (Greece/Alexander's four-way split); terrifying beast with iron teeth and ten horns (Rome and its successors).

DAN 7:9-10 The Ancient of Days sits on a flaming throne: "His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool... thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."

DAN 7:13-14 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away." — Jesus' favorite self-designation ("Son of Man") rooted here; applied to His return (Mark 14:62).

DAN 9:24-27 The 70 Weeks prophecy: "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place." — one of the most studied and disputed prophecies in Scripture, with fulfillment calculations pointing toward Christ's crucifixion.

DAN 12:2-3 "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." — the clearest statement of bodily resurrection in the OT.

Ezekiel — The Merkavah Vision; Glory Departs; Valley of Dry Bones

A priest-prophet among the exiles at the Chebar River — extraordinary visions, symbolic actions, and the most detailed picture of the New Covenant transformation in the OT.

- EZEK 1:4-10** Ezekiel's merkavah (chariot-throne) vision: a storm cloud with lightning; four living creatures each with four faces (man, lion, ox, eagle); four wheels within wheels; eyes on the wheel rims; the vault of crystal above; the throne of sapphire; "a figure like that of a man." The indescribable glory of God described as carefully as human language allows.
- EZEK 1:28** "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking." — five levels of qualification ("appearance of the likeness of the glory") — the closest a human writer comes to saying "indescribable."
- EZEK 4:1-8** Symbolic actions: Ezekiel lies on his left side 390 days (one day per year of Israel's sin) then on his right side 40 days (Judah's years). He "bears" the sin of the nation prophetically.
- EZEK 10:1-22** The glory of the LORD departs the Temple in stages — from the inner sanctuary to the threshold to the east gate. The most devastating spiritual event in the OT: God's manifest presence leaving His house.
- EZEK 18:20** "The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child." — individual moral accountability declared against the proverb "the fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (18:2).
- EZEK 34:11-16** God as the true Shepherd of Israel: "I myself will search for my sheep and look after them... I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered... I will tend them in a good pasture." — Jesus draws on this passage for the Good Shepherd discourse (John 10).
- EZEK 36:25-27** "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees." — the New Covenant in Ezekiel's terms; cited by Jesus in John 3:5.
- EZEK 37:1-10** The Valley of Dry Bones: Ezekiel prophesies over a valley of very dry bones. As he speaks the word of God: noise, rattling, bones come together, tendons and flesh appear, skin covers them. He prophesies breath — and "they came to life and stood up on their feet — a vast army." Israel's national resurrection foretold.
- EZEK 37:11-14** "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'... I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land." — exile as death; return as resurrection; the Spirit as the agent of both.
- EZEK 43:1-5** In the vision of the future Temple (chs. 40–48): "the glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east... The glory of the LORD filled the temple." — the glory that departed in ch. 10 returns permanently to a greater Temple.

Lamentations — Five Poems of Grief Over Jerusalem’s Destruction

Five acrostic poems of unsparing grief over Jerusalem’s fall — attributed traditionally to Jeremiah. The most sustained expression of communal lament in Scripture, alongside an extraordinary affirmation of hope.

- LAM 1:1** “How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.” — a city reduced from royalty to slavery in one act of divine judgment.
- LAM 1:12** “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the LORD brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?” — Jerusalem’s self-lament; traditionally read as a type of Christ’s passion.
- LAM 3:1-16** “I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the LORD’s wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light... He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.” — the most severe human abandonment by God described in Scripture.
- LAM 3:21-23** “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” — the only sustained hope in the book; rising from the deepest point of the book (ch. 3 is the central, acrostic chapter).
- LAM 3:25-26** “The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.”
- LAM 5:19-21** “You, LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation... Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old.” — the book ends with a prayer, not a resolution. Grief held alongside trust.

Esther — “For Such a Time as This”; Purim Instituted

The only OT book that never explicitly names God — yet divine providence is evident on every page. A Jewish orphan saves her people from genocide.

- ESTHER 2:5-7** Mordecai, a Benjaminite exile, has raised his cousin Hadassah (Esther) — “lovely in form and features” — after her parents died. He brings her up as his own daughter.
- ESTHER 2:15-17** Esther chosen as queen: “She won the favor of everyone who saw her... the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his grace and favor more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen.”
- ESTHER 3:1-6** Haman the Agagite elevated; all officials bow to him. Mordecai refuses to bow. “Haman was enraged.” He learns Mordecai is Jewish and plots to destroy not just Mordecai but all Jews throughout the entire Persian Empire. The personal becomes genocidal.
- ESTHER 3:8-9** Haman to the king: “There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king’s laws.” He offers 10,000 talents of silver to fund the genocide.
- ESTHER 4:13-14** Mordecai to Esther (who hesitates to risk her life before the king): “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” — the book’s central theological claim: humans positioned by Providence for specific moments.
- ESTHER 4:16** “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” — Esther’s moment of decision.
- ESTHER 5:1-3** Esther approaches the king unsummoned — a capital offense. He extends his golden scepter: “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.” — God’s invisible hand in the extension of grace.
- ESTHER 6:1** “That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him.” — the king’s insomnia leads to the discovery that Mordecai saved his life and was never honored. Divine timing in a sleepless night.
- ESTHER 7:3-6** At the second banquet, Esther reveals Haman’s plot: “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life... For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated.” The king: “Who is he? Where is he?” Esther: “An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!”
- ESTHER 7:9-10** Haman hanged on the 75-foot pole he had prepared for Mordecai. “Then the king’s fury subsided.” — the reversal complete: the gallows prepared for the righteous becomes the gallows for the wicked.
- ESTHER 9:20-22** Mordecai establishes the feast of Purim (from pur = lot, referring to Haman’s casting of lots) annually on the 14th and 15th of Adar — “as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration.” Still observed today.

Cyrus the Great Decrees the Return — “Let Him Go Up”

In his first year as king, Cyrus fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy of 150+ years earlier — the exiles are free to return and build.

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| EZRA 1:2-4 | “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD... And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.” |
| 2 CHR 36:23 | “Let him go up.” — the last two words of the Hebrew canon (Chronicles closes the Hebrew Bible), echoing the Exodus: “go up” out of Egypt. The OT ends facing forward, toward the return. |
| ISA 44:28 | “Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’” — Isaiah named Cyrus by name 150+ years before this decree. Fulfilled precisely. |

The Post-Exilic Restoration

538 – C. 430 BC

538–515 BC *Ezra 1:1-6:22*

Zerubbabel's Return; The Temple Foundation Laid; Opposition; Temple Completed

The first return from exile — about 50,000 people; the altar rebuilt, the foundation laid, opposition mounting, the Temple finally completed after 21 years.

- EZRA 1:5-6** “Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites — everyone whose heart God had moved — prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts.” — echoes of the Exodus and the plundering of Egypt (Exod 12:35-36).
- EZRA 2:64-65** Total of the returning community: 42,360 people, besides their 7,337 servants and 200 male and female singers. A substantial community returning to a ruined land.
- EZRA 3:10-13** Foundation of the Temple laid: priests in robes with trumpets; Levites with cymbals; praise and thanksgiving — “The LORD is good; his love toward Israel endures forever.” The people shout with joy. But many old priests who had seen the first Temple weep loudly — “the sound was heard far away.” Joy and grief intermingled. “No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping.”
- EZRA 4:1-5** Opposition: “The enemies of Judah and Benjamin” offer to help build — and when refused, “set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. They bribed officials... to work against them.” Work halted for 15 years.
- EZRA 5:1-2** Haggai and Zechariah prophesy; Zerubbabel and Jeshua restart building. “The prophets of God were with them, supporting them.” — preaching that moves hands and feet.
- EZRA 6:15-16** The Temple completed on the 3rd day of Adar in the 6th year of Darius (515 BC). “The people of Israel — the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles — celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy.”
- EZRA 6:19-21** Passover kept on the 14th of Nisan. “All who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the LORD, the God of Israel, ate with them.” — the covenant community includes those who join by faith, not merely by birth.

Haggai — “Consider Your Ways”; Zerubbabel the Signet Ring

The shortest of the post-exilic prophets — four messages in four months that reignite the stalled Temple reconstruction.

- HAG 1:2-4** “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘These people say, “The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD’s house.” ... ‘Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?’”
- HAG 1:6** “You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” — economic consequences of spiritual negligence.
- HAG 1:9** “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why? ... Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house.”
- HAG 1:12-14** Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the remnant obey. “The LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel... and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people.” They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God.
- HAG 2:6-7** “In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory.” — some read “desired by all nations” as Messianic (cf. Heb 12:26-27).
- HAG 2:9** “‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace.’” — the Second Temple’s greater glory fulfilled when Jesus enters it (Mal 3:1 ; John 2:19-21).
- HAG 2:23** “‘On that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you.’” — Zerubbabel as a type of Christ; the Davidic line restored to significance after the curse of Jeconiah (Jer 22:24-30).

Zechariah — Eight Night Visions; The Branch; King on a Donkey; Thirty Pieces of Silver

The most Messianic of the minor prophets — eight symbolic night visions, two prophetic burdens, and some of the most precise Messianic prophecies in the OT.

- ZECH 1:3** “Return to me, declares the LORD Almighty, and I will return to you.” — the most concise summary of the entire prophetic call to repentance.
- ZECH 2:8** “For whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye.” — God’s protective jealousy for His people.
- ZECH 3:1-5** Vision of Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD; Satan at his right hand accusing him. Joshua in filthy clothes. The angel commands: “Take off his filthy clothes.” “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.” — justification by grace visualized. The Branch announced (3:8).
- ZECH 4:6** “‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.” — Zerubbabel’s task accomplished by God’s Spirit, not human resources.
- ZECH 9:9** “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” — fulfilled at the Triumphal Entry (Matt 21:4-5 ; John 12:14-15).
- ZECH 11:12-13** “So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’ — the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the LORD.” — fulfilled at Judas’s betrayal and the potter’s field (Matt 27:3-10).
- ZECH 12:10** “They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.” — John cites this at the crucifixion (John 19:37); Revelation cites it at Christ’s return (Rev 1:7).
- ZECH 13:7** “‘Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” — Jesus quotes this at Gethsemane (Matt 26:31).
- ZECH 14:4** “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem... and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley.” — the eschatological return of God to Jerusalem; from the mountain where Jesus ascended (Acts 1:11-12).

Ezra Returns — Scripture Reading; Intermarriage Crisis Resolved

The scribe-priest who reforms Israel's worship and identity — by reading the Law aloud and weeping.

- EZRA 7:6** “Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.” — the threefold pattern: study → practice → teach. The proper order.
- EZRA 7:9-10** “The gracious hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD.” — ability and character together, produced by devotion.
- EZRA 9:3-6** When Ezra hears about the widespread intermarriage with pagan peoples, he tears his tunic and cloak, pulls hair from his head and beard, and sits “appalled.” At the evening sacrifice, he falls on his knees, spreads his hands to God, and confesses: “I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you.”
- NEH 8:1-3** Ezra brings the Book of the Law before the whole assembly — men, women, and all who could understand. He reads it aloud from daybreak until noon. All the people listen attentively.
- NEH 8:5-6** Ezra opens the book; all the people stand. He praises the LORD the great God; all the people lift their hands and respond, “Amen! Amen!” Then they bow down and worship the LORD with their faces to the ground.
- NEH 8:8** “They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning, so that the people understood what was being read.” — expository preaching defined in one verse.
- NEH 8:10** “Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” — spoken to those weeping at hearing the Law; celebration commanded as the right response to the Word.

Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem's Walls in 52 Days

The cupbearer who becomes a governor — prayer, leadership, perseverance, and practical reform in the face of ridicule and plot.

- NEH 1:3-4** Nehemiah hears: “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” When he heard this, Nehemiah sat down and wept, mourned and fasted for days, and prayed before the God of heaven.
- NEH 1:5-11** Nehemiah’s prayer: confession of sin for himself and his people; appeal to God’s covenant promises; request for favor with the king. A pattern for intercessory prayer in the face of national crisis.
- NEH 2:4-5** When the king asks what Nehemiah wants: “Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king.” — the arrow prayer in the middle of a conversation; instant prayer in a moment of need.
- NEH 2:17-18** Nehemiah to the Jerusalem leaders: “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” He told them about the gracious hand of God on him. “They replied, ‘Let us start rebuilding.’ So they began this good work.”
- NEH 4:1-3** Sanballat mocks: “What are those feeble Jews doing?... Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day?” Tobiah: “What they are building — even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!”
- NEH 4:9** “But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.” — prayer plus practical action; spiritual and physical defense together.
- NEH 4:17-18** “Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked.” — building and guarding simultaneously; the posture of the church in a hostile world.
- NEH 6:15-16** “So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.”
- NEH 9:1-37** The great covenant renewal prayer — the longest recorded prayer in the OT, spanning creation to the present day, confessing sin, recounting God’s faithfulness through the Exodus, wilderness, judges, prophets, and exile.
- NEH 13:14,22,29,31** Four times Nehemiah closes a reform section with: “Remember me, my God, for this.” — personal accountability before God rather than public acclaim.

Malachi — The Last Prophet; Blemished Offerings; Elijah to Come; 400 Years of Silence

The last prophetic voice before the NT — rebuking the same sins as Nehemiah, announcing the messenger and the Day of the LORD, and closing with a promise that becomes the opening of the Gospel of Mark.

- MAL 1:2** “‘I have loved you,’ says the LORD. But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’” — the disputation form that structures the entire book: God makes a claim; the people question it; God answers. Six rounds.
- MAL 1:6-8** “A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me?... It is you priests who show contempt for my name. But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’ By offering defiled food on my altar... When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you?”
- MAL 1:11** “My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations.” — a prophecy of worldwide Gentile worship fulfilled in the Church.
- MAL 2:10** “Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?” — covenant community as family; betrayal of each other is betrayal of the Father.
- MAL 2:16** “The man who hates and divorces his wife does violence to the one he should protect.” — God’s declaration on divorce as an act of violence against the covenant partner.
- MAL 3:1** “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come.” — fulfilled in John the Baptist and Jesus (Matt 11:10 ; Mark 1:2).
- MAL 3:6** “I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.” — God’s immutability as the ground of Israel’s survival despite its faithlessness.
- MAL 3:10** “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this... and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” — the only place in Scripture where God invites being tested.
- MAL 3:16-17** “Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. ‘On the day when I act,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘they will be my treasured possession.’”
- MAL 4:1-3** “‘Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble... But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked...’”
- MAL 4:4** “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.” — the final call: return to Moses. The Law remains the standard.
- MAL 4:5-6** “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.” — the very last words of the Hebrew canon; fulfilled in John the Baptist (Luke 1:17 ; Matt 17:12). Then 400 years of prophetic silence — until “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord’” (Mark 1:3).

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