

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

MADE EASY



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HENDRICKSON
PUBLISHERS

ROSE
PUBLISHING

The Books of the Bible Made Easy
©2018 Rose Publishing, LLC

Rose Publishing, LLC
P.O. Box 3473
Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473 USA
www.hendricksonrose.com

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Cover and layout design by Cristalle Kishi.

Photos provided by Shutterstock.com.

Printed in the United States of America
010718VP

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THE OLD TESTAMENT

Books of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is made up of thirty-nine books, divided into four main sections.

PENTATEUCH	HISTORICAL BOOKS	POETRY & WISDOM BOOKS
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs

PROPHETIC BOOKS		
Major Prophets: Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Minor Prophets: Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah	Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

PENTATEUCH

What Is the Pentateuch?

The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

- The word *Pentateuch* comes from a Greek word that means “five scrolls.”
- In Hebrew, these books are known as the Torah, which means “law” or “instruction.”
- It is God’s instructions for a nation learning to be God’s people.

These five books lay the basis for the rest of the Bible. They explain:

- The origin of the universe, of the nations, and of God’s people.
- The need for God’s direct intervention in human history—human sin.
- How God acts in the lives of his people.

Main Characters

- **God:** God is the Pentateuch’s central focus. Each story reveals something about God, his character, or how he works.
- **Abraham:** Abraham’s calling shows God’s initiative to rescue humanity from sin and death.
- **Israel:** God decided to work his plan of salvation in and through Israel, a chosen people.
- **Moses:** Moses’ life was bound to the life of God’s people and to God himself.
- **The Promised Land:** The land is the concrete representation of God’s promises to Abraham. The Israelites’ relationship with the land becomes a constant theme in the Pentateuch and beyond.

BOOK	FOCUS
GENESIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Origins of the world ■ Origins of the nations ■ Origins of God’s people
EXODUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ God’s people and their origin as a nation ■ Organizing the Israelites to become God’s people
LEVITICUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Equipping the people to become God’s holy nation ■ The heart of the Torah (Pentateuch) is holiness
NUMBERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Organization of God’s people as God’s army ■ On the way to reclaim the Promised Land ■ Death of the old generation ■ Birth of the new generation
DEUTERONOMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ God’s instructions for a new generation ■ God’s instructions for a generation at the entrance of the Promised Land ■ Basing the identity of God’s people on the covenant

Ancient Middle East



GENESIS

THE BEGINNINGS OF CREATION, THE NATIONS, AND THE ISRAELITES

WRITTEN c. 1446–1406 BC by Moses

PURPOSE To show that God is sovereign and loves his creation.

SUMMARY The book of Genesis is a book of origins: the good creation of the world, the start of human problems, and the beginning of God’s solution to those problems. The stories in Genesis reveal deeply broken relationships: separation between God and his creation; rivalries among family members; and violence between people groups. Yet we also see God beginning to restore the brokenness by choosing a family—Abraham’s family—and guiding and rescuing them along the way.

OUTLINE

- The beginning of the world (1–2)
- The beginning of nations (3–10)
- The beginning of the Israelites (11–50)

JESUS IN GENESIS As a book of origins, Genesis shows the origin of humanity’s greatest predicament: sin. It also shows that God’s mercy promised his own solution to this quandary: “And 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” (Genesis 3:15). God’s promises in Genesis point to his final and perfect solution for humanity’s fallen state: Jesus, God’s own Son.

KEY VERSE

The Lord said to Abraham: “*I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants.*”
—Genesis 17:7

EXODUS



GOD'S DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT

WRITTEN c. 1446–1406 BC by Moses

PURPOSE To show God's faithfulness to the covenant and provide Israel with guidelines for holy living.

SUMMARY The book of Exodus tells the story of God's people moving from bondage to freedom. God chooses a man named Moses to lead the Israelites (Hebrews) out of slavery in Egypt and into the wilderness where they can worship God. The God of Israel proves himself to be the only true God, defeating the false gods of Egypt. At Mt. Sinai, God gives his people instructions on how to live as a community of holy people.

OUTLINE

- Israel in Egypt (1–15)
- Israel on the way toward Sinai (15–18)
- Israel at Sinai (19–40)

JESUS IN EXODUS Moses' ministry as judge, priest, and prophet anticipated Jesus' own ministry (Hebrews 3:1–6). The Passover celebration and sacrifice (Exodus 12) help us understand Christ's sacrifice on the cross on our behalf. In the exodus, God liberated Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh with great acts of power. Now, God has freed us from the bondage of sin and death with the greatest act of grace and power: Jesus' death and resurrection.

KEY VERSE

"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" —Exodus 3:14

LEVITICUS

LAW AND SACRIFICE

WRITTEN c. 1446–1406 BC by Moses

PURPOSE To instruct Israel on how to be holy and be a blessing to others.

SUMMARY The book of Leviticus teaches the Israelites how to live in the presence of a holy God. It is a detailed list of instructions for priests, purity rituals, and how to make atonement for the people's sins. The atonement made through sacrifices in Leviticus foreshadows Jesus' own sacrifice of himself on the cross that makes atonement for our sins today.

OUTLINE

- Sacrifice (1–7)
- Priesthood (8–10)
- Clean and unclean (11–15)
- Day of Atonement (16)
- Laws for daily life (17–27)

JESUS IN LEVITICUS God instructed his people from the tabernacle. The tabernacle, where God's presence dwelt, was the place of revelation. In it, God revealed his glory and his will for his people. Christ is God's perfect revelation (Hebrews 1:1–2; Colossians 1:15). Jesus himself came to the world as a human to “tabernacle” (dwell) among us (John 1:14) because he is God. Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of the law (Matthew 5:17), and he was the perfect sacrifice that makes all other sacrifices unnecessary (Hebrews 9:11–28).

KEY VERSE

“Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God.” —Leviticus 20:7