

NOTES	NUTSHELL SUMMARIES OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">First 5 Books also called The Law, The Torah, The Penteteuch (also history books). Written by Moses.</p>	<p><b>1 – GENESIS</b> Book of all beginnings, creation, the fall, promise of Messiah, call of Abraham, covenants (Adamic, Noahic, Ahrhamic), the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), rise to power of Joseph in Egypt, God’s people brought to Egypt to preserve them.</p>
	<p><b>2 – EXODUS</b> In bondage in Egypt, God raised up a deliverer (Moses), Moses asks Pharaoh to let God’s people go, 10 plagues, first Passover, release from Egypt, crossing Red Sea, provision in the wilderness, giving of the Law (Mosaic Covenant), making a people and a nation out of a bunch of ragtag slaves. Building the tabernacle, God’s glory comes to reside with them (pillar of fire, cloud by night, Shekinah in the tabernacle.)</p>
	<p><b>3 – LEVITICUS</b> Book about the sacrificial system, God’s requirements for holy living, details about the tabernacle and furnishings, the feasts of God, the priesthood. All points to Jesus.</p>
	<p><b>4 – NUMBERS</b> The wanderings in the desert, two big census (point to Jesus), disobedience and punishment, a call to be holy before a holy God. Plagues and healing. Attempts to curse God’s people (Balaam and donkey), failure results in only blessings for Israel (and prophecies of coming Messiah).</p>
	<p><b>5 – DEUTERONOMY</b> God’s people camped on the plains of Moab, ready to enter the Promised Land. A new generation of people ready to go (all but two died in the wilderness). Moses delivers several speeches and sermons to the people about obeying God and what to expect if they do (blessings) and if they don’t (cursings). This book concludes the TORAH, Penteteuch, the Law. Moses dies, God buries Him, Joshua takes over as leader.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">History books, history of Israel from Conquest to Captivity</p>	<p><b>6 – JOSHUA</b> Entrance into the Promised Land, meeting with the “Captain of the Lord’s Army,” fall of Jericho, the first of many cities God delivers into the hands of His people. About the conquests of the land of Canaan. Also has many mistakes the people make. God directs the conquests as they take over the land. Book begins (or continues) the historical section of the Old Testament.</p>
	<p><b>7 – JUDGES</b> About the darkest days in Israel’s early history. A series of “sin cycles” for 350 years as they turn away from Him again and again. Series of 14 different judges (including a woman), people are disobedient, get into trouble, call out for deliverance and God provides it, then battles, trials, disobedience. Some very gruesome stories in this book. Gideon, Samson, Deborah and others.</p>
	<p><b>8 – RUTH</b> A beautiful little book about a wonderful love story, placed in the dark days of Israel (Judges). Also symbolic for the love of God for His people, and a prophecy of how God will work with the Jews and the Gentiles. The great grandparents (Boaz and Ruth) of King David are the central characters of this book. A look at our Kinsman-Redeemer.</p>
	<p><b>9 – 1 SAMUEL</b> The last judge of Israel, first prophet, wrote this book. Israel rejects God as their King, wants a human king like their neighbors. First king of Israel, Saul. Saul’s disobedience, anointing of another king, God’s choice – David. Stories include the wars with the Philistines (ark goes into battle, captured...gold tumors!), David and Goliath. David and Jonathon, Saul jealous of David, David runs for his life. Saul dies in battle.</p>
	<p><b>10 – 2 SAMUEL</b> David becomes king of Israel. About his victories in battle, sins (Bathsheba, Uriah, etc.) Problems in his household, David’s disobedience, (still a man after “God’s own heart”) Davidic Covenant (Messiah to come from line of David) God chooses place for His temple, David purchases land.</p>

	<p><b>11 – 1 KINGS</b> David dies, son Solomon becomes king of Israel. Very wise, very wealthy, kingdom grows and is united, world-famous. Solomon builds the temple. Solomon disobeys, has over 1000 wives and concubines, head turned away from God. Solomon dies. Son Rehoboam becomes king, but makes many mistakes and the kingdom is split into two – Northern Kingdom of Israel, Southern Kingdom of Judah. About the reigns of mostly evil kings in the north and in the south. Gets increasingly worse. Prophets Elijah and Elisha.</p>
	<p><b>12 – 2 KINGS</b> Continuing the story of the divided kingdom, the reigns of only evil kings in the northern kingdom of Israel, and some good, but mostly evil kings in the southern kingdom of Judah. Elijah taken to heaven in whirlwind, Elisha’s ministry, Hezekiah. Where one angel kills 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. Northern kingdom conquered by Assyria in 722 BC, goes into captivity – never returns. Book ends with conquest of southern kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (3 sieges, fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC). 70-year captivity in Babylon begins.</p>
	<p><b>13 – 1 CHRONICLES</b> Covers same history as previous books, but from different perspective. More divine perspective, does not involve northern kingdom of Israel (focuses on Judah, and line of David). Begins with genealogies of David and Israel, David’s reign, preparation for the building of the Temple, last days of David. Coronation of his son Solomon, David dies.</p>
	<p><b>14 – 2 CHRONICLES</b> Continuation of divine perspective on history of Israel (Judah) started in previous book. Covers same time period as 1-2 Kings, but doesn’t say much about northern Kingdom of Israel, focuses on Judah. Also focuses on the godly kings of Judah (not as much on evil kings). Starts with Solomon’s reign through Zedekiah, destruction of Jerusalem, captivity, and then the proclamation by King Cyrus of Persia (after he conquers Babylon), the captivity for the Jews is over, he decrees that they are to go back to their land.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">POST EXILIC (After the Exile) History Books</p>	<p><b>15 – EZRA</b> Decree of Cyrus of Persia to return. 1<sup>st</sup> return from Babylon (Persia) under Zerubbabel and another under Ezra. Only remnant returns (50,000 people). Rebuilding temple, construction interrupted by opposing powers, later completed. Also concentrates on rebuilding the people into a people of God. 2<sup>nd</sup> (after Solomon’s) temple completed, not nearly as grand as 1<sup>st</sup> Temple.</p>
	<p><b>16 – NEHEMIAH</b> Jewish man who served king of Persia, but wanted to come back to rebuild Jerusalem. Gained support from king to return. Came back to Jerusalem to find broken down walls, things in terrible disarray, people gone astray again, etc. Excellent portrayal of strong leadership. This man gets the city walls rebuilt (very important) during very difficult times. Second part of book focuses on rebuilding the people again and getting them into a pattern of obedience, not disobedience. Some very important decrees in this book which serve as markers for prophecies.</p>
	<p><b>17 – ESTHER</b> A story about the Jews who remained in Persia after the captivity. One particular Jewish girl, Hebrew name Hadassah, enters a beauty contest and becomes new queen to King of Persia, Xerxes. Story of attempt to wipe out God’s people there (bad guy Haman), how God saves His people through Esther’s courage and obedience. Feast of Purim comes from story in this book. This book ends the historical section of the Old Testament.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Poetry Books</p>	<p><b>18 – JOB</b> Begins POETRY section of OT. About suffering and science. Written by a man who had everything taken away. God gave Satan permission to test Job, who complained a lot, but never profaned God. 3 friends visit him with all kinds of human wisdom, a 4<sup>th</sup> man has some good answers, then God Himself answers Job with some amazing words. We hear about dinosaurs in this book, and many other incredibly accurate scientific facts. In the end, this man has everything restored double. Lots of information about the enemy, suffering, and our natural world.</p>

	<p><b>19 – PSALMS</b>  Longest book of Bible. Book of comfort, written mostly by King David. Full of Messianic prophecies (like Psalm 22). Probably most read book of Bible, as we can relate to the song writers’ human situations. Shepherd’s song (Psalm 23). Parts written by Moses, Solomon, and Hezekiah among others. The song book of Israel.</p>
	<p><b>20 – PROVERBS</b>  Book of instructions written by King Solomon. Practical advice on how to live our lives in the right way, the way that pleases God and brings us health and happiness throughout life. Wisdom is personified (ch 8) in this book and speaks throughout. One chapter about the perfect wife. A neglected but very valuable book today.</p>
	<p><b>21 – ECCLESIASTES</b>  An interesting book written by King Solomon in his later, older years when he had turned away from God, then back again. “Meaningless, meaningless, it’s all meaningless” (human pursuits) is the theme, concluding with instruction to turn to God and stick with Him through life. Solomon tried everything and nothing satisfied him. Realized late his mistake was turning away from God.</p>
	<p><b>22 – SONG OF SOLOMON</b>  A beautiful poetic book written about young love. In some early churches book considered X-rated because of graphic language. Is a love story about a shepherd who was also a king and loved a shepherd girl. Eventually comes to marry her and she is surprised that he is the king! A beautiful story that is symbolic of Jesus’ as shepherd and King, who will come for His church, His bride. (written by a king in his early, happier years) Ends the poetry section of OT.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Prophecy Books (5 Major Prophets)</b></p>	<p><b>23 – ISAIAH</b>  Begins books of major prophets. Beautiful book often called “Bible in a nutshell,” contains prophecies about the coming Messiah, including the famous words “For unto as a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” Also has words of prophecy against Israel and God’s people for disobedience, but promises of restoration and the second coming of Messiah and His Millennial Kingdom. Ultimate destruction of God’s enemies also prophesied. Contains whole plan of God including much information about end times and return of Messiah.</p>
	<p><b>24 – JEREMIAH</b>  Written just before the fall of Jerusalem by a man called the “weeping prophet” who did many strange things in obedience to God’s call to prophesy about both the destruction of Jerusalem and its restoration. Contains the New Covenant (ch 31) God will make with His people. Also prophesies the fall of Israel’s enemies, and the history of the final days of Jerusalem before Nebuchadnezzar’s armies destroyed it.</p>
	<p><b>25 – LAMENTATIONS</b>  Written as acrostic poetry about the fall of Jerusalem, by Jeremiah. A book of mourning and weeping over the disobedience of God’s people and His righteous wrath. Also describes in detail the gruesome conditions of the siege of Jerusalem, but also contains prayers and prophecies of coming restoration of not only the city, but God’s people back to the land.</p>
	<p><b>26 – EZEKIEL</b>  Written by a prophet who was captured in the 2<sup>nd</sup> siege of Jerusalem and taken to Babylon. Contains some amazing descriptions of heaven and God’s throne, as well as some remarkable prophecies. This man did some very strange things to act out God’s prophecies and plan. 2 chapters compare Israel and Judah to harlots. God’s wife as an adulteress. Also prophecies restoration in the future, bringing back of Jews in unbelief to their land (after the 2<sup>nd</sup> diaspora in 70 AD, a time we are in now), an incredible attack on Israel where God intervenes, and plans for the Millennial Temple. Considered an apocalyptic book.</p>

	<p><b>27 – DANIEL</b>  Written by Hebrew man taken into captivity in Babylon at very early age, rose to become 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar. Very apocalyptic book filled with prophecies about future Gentile kingdoms (a strange dream statue), end times, and restoration of God’s people and coming King of the entire world whose government would have no end. Most attacked book in the Bible due to its amazing prophecies. Strange dreams, lion’s den, fiery furnace, handwriting on the wall, fall of Babylon, strange creatures that portray end of time powers, incredible prophecies of “kings of north and south,” coming Gentile powers, etc. Ends books of major prophets.</p>
<b>Prophecy Books (12 Minor Prophets)</b>	<p><b>28 – HOSEA</b>  Begins books of minor prophets. Very interesting little book about God telling the author to take a prostitute as his wife and have children. God names the children to show how He is going to “divorce” Israel, but He will take her back again. God uses these events to make a point about Israel who was a harlot in His eyes. Remainder of book is judgment and promises of restoration. Beautiful look at God’s unconditional love for His people.</p>
	<p><b>29 – JOEL</b>  A look at the “terrible day of the Lord.” Author uses a locust plague to describe coming judgment, both in the local time then (coming Babylonian siege) and end times at the ultimate Day of the Lord – the day of His wrath and judgment. Contains a great deal of end times information. This book also contains lovely promises of restoration.</p>
	<p><b>30 – AMOS</b>  Prophecies during a time of prosperity for Israel, but warns of coming judgment because of their disobedience. This author was a shepherd that God called to witness His word to the northern kingdom of Israel, but whose words sound as if he is describing conditions in our country today. Judgment on surrounding enemy nations as well. Most of book is judgment, but also contains promises of restoration (something we will find in every book of judgment on Israel...the continuing promise of restoration is always there. Only for the Jews, however, not for Gentile kingdoms that He will destroy.)</p>
	<p><b>31 – OBADIAH</b>  This book is shortest in OT, and is all about the judgment and coming destruction of only ONE nation, an enemy of Israel – EDOM. These were descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother, and as such should have defended Israel, but did not. They participated in the sacking of Jerusalem and enjoyed their plunder. For this, and their abandonment of God, God judged them and destroyed them completely. These people used to live in the “red rocks of Edom” which we know today as Petra, a place where God may preserve His people in end times (Revelation 12).</p>
	<p><b>32 – JONAH</b>  Could be called a big fish story, but a true event about a prophet who was told to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. Since Nineveh was capital of Assyria, Israel’s greatest enemy, Jonah did not want to go and in fact ran in the opposite direction. He soon found you don’t say NO to God. He was thrown overboard, swallowed by a great fish, where he made a passionate prayer to God, and spit out 3 days later on dry ground. He did go to Nineveh and begrudgingly preached God’s word, where, to his surprise and chagrin, the people (everyone, from the king on down) repented and God spared them – for a time. Jonah was not very happy about that – he wanted God to destroy them (which He did later, after prophecy from Nahum). A type for death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus said “the sign of Jonah” would point to His mission on earth.</p>
	<p><b>33 – MICAH</b>  This book is much like Isaiah but on much smaller scale. It is very poetic and beautifully written. It is mostly judgment on the southern kingdom of Judah, but also contains great prophecies about the birth of the coming Messiah (in Bethlehem) and His rejection by the Jews. God pleads his case (like in a courtroom) against His people in this book.</p>

**34 – NAHUM**

Another book about the coming judgment and destruction of one of Israel’s great enemies – Assyria (the only focus of this book). It is about 140 years after Jonah preached repentance there, but this time it is too late. They have gone back to their evil ways and God will soon bring judgment. It is a graphic book about the coming fall of Nineveh. No one will mourn her destruction. God may be slow to wrath and judgment, but He does bring justice in His time.

**35 – HABAKKUK**

An interesting little book about a conversation between a prophet and God about how long God will wait to bring justice. The prophet is upset about the ways of his people, the Jews. He asks God how long He is going to allow this sinfulness. God answers the prophet that judgment is on its way, from a place he wouldn’t have thought (the Babylonians). The prophet goes from being upset and wrestling with God, to worshipping Him and asking for mercy in His judgment. Judgment is coming, but still he will praise God. Some great statements about faith in this book like “the just will live by faith,” which is used by Paul many times in the New Testament.

**36 – ZEPHANIAH**

This book is about judgment in the “Day of the Lord.” Prophecies about judgment on the whole earth, both northern and southern kingdoms and again on the whole earth. Book opens with statement “I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land, says the Lord.” But closes, again, with promises of coming restoration. Contains some very interesting prophecies of the people returning to the land, which have already been fulfilled in part.

**37 – HAGGAI**

Post exilic. People have returned from captivity, but priorities are wrong. God asks them to “consider their ways.” They have built their houses in luxurious ways, but they have not rebuilt the temple, which God says is vital to His plan. Lots of opposition from neighboring powers. God raises up Zerubbabel to lead people to get temple rebuilt. Good role model for leadership. People respond and rebuild. God promises to restore Israel and destroy her enemies.

**38 – ZECHARIAH**

A remarkable book about a series of visions in one night that capsulize God’s plan for Israel from this post exile period to the second coming of Messiah and His Millennial kingdom. A very apocalyptic book which draws the whole plan in a nutshell (focusing on the Jews, not Gentiles). Passages reveal that Jews will indeed come to belief in the Messiah, but will suffer greatly during the Tribulation (“time of Jacob’s Trouble”). The feast of tabernacles is featured in this book, the one that stands for the Millennial Kingdom. Includes a call to repentance to get right before God, and not make the mistakes of their past fathers. Much information about end times.

**39 – MALACHI**

Last book of the Bible, about 400 years before Jesus is born. Also last book of minor prophets. Written about 100 years after last book, to warn backsliders about their ways. Malachi pleads with the people to restore their covenant relationship with God, and to get right with Him again. Messianic prophecies. Contains the famous section on tithing.

Note: Zephaniah through Malachi are considered “post exilic” books (written after the exile in Babylon)