

Types of Biblical Literature

Narrative

**Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, Daniel (ch 1 - 6)
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts**

When studying these narrative books, it is important to remember that the things the characters do and say are not necessarily correct. For example, Joseph's test of his brothers in Genesis 42-44 does not infer that we should try to entrap others in such a way, and God's apparent blessing of Rahab for her lie in Joshua 2 does not mean it's a good thing. Acts is the classic book for taking narrative and turning it into doctrine – be extra careful with it.

Poetry & Wisdom

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

Each of these books poses its own problems.

- *Job* contains vast chapters of bad advice from his 'comforters', that cannot be considered sound doctrine, so the arguments must be followed closely.
- *Psalms* are songs written to God, but are also to be understood as God's word to us, helping us to express ourselves to God and consider His ways.
- *Proverbs* is, thankfully, quite straight forward being about making godly choices and living wisely, though watch out for taking universal truth where it is not implied (eg. 22:6)
- *Ecclesiastes* however, while also working to this same end, contains a lot of statements that can easily be taken out of context, such as 10:19, "money is the answer for everything," and the repeated refrain of "everything is meaningless"! This is a book where all parts need to be considered in the light of its overall message.
- *Song of Songs* is a lyrical love song, and the metaphors are often clear and provocative. The aim of the book though is to show us whom to love and how to love them – keep this in mind!

Prophecy

**Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel (ch 7 – 12), Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah
Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
Revelation**

The prophetic writers tend to be very direct and personal in their remarks, with much use of 'you' and 'your'. Rather than reading these straight, it is necessary to understand the historical and spiritual background, together with who exactly is the intended recipient. When you read in Ezekiel 20:47, "I am about to set fire to you" or Obadiah 7, "those who eat your bread will set a trap for you, but you will not detect it", don't take these things to heart, but look for the context and the meaning behind what is being said.

As for Revelation and the closing chapters of Daniel, these need very careful handling, but should not be shied away from. Keep in mind the overview at all times, and don't allow yourself to be distracted by whacky and unbiblical explanations of things that we cannot yet fathom.

Epistles

**Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter
1, 2 & 3 John, Jude**

The difficulty in studying the epistles is discerning which instructions are given only to the individual, and which are universal. For example, in 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul asks Timothy to bring his cloak and parchments to him. Obviously, this is not a command for us all, yet two chapters earlier he says Timothy should be one who correctly handles the Word of Truth – a command that is taken to be universal. The distinction is often obvious, but in some cases it is not so obvious, especially when cultural differences are taken into account.

Book	Supposed Author	Est. Date	Type
Genesis	Moses	1450 - 1410 BC	Narrative
Exodus			
Leviticus			
Numbers			
Deuteronomy			
Joshua	Joshua	1400 - 1370 BC	
Judges	poss Samuel	1050 - 1000 BC	
Ruth	< <i>Unknown</i> >	1000 BC	
1 & 2 Samuel	Samuel & others	930 BC & later	
1 & 2 Kings	poss Jeremiah	550 BC	
1 & 2 Chronicles	Ezra	450 - 425 BC	
Ezra		456 - 444 BC	
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	445 - 425 BC	
Esther	< <i>Unknown</i> >	465 BC	
Job	< <i>Unknown</i> >	Unknown ~ 1500 BC	
Psalms	Various (inc David)	10 th Century BC	
Proverbs	Various (inc Solomon)	950 - 700 BC	
Ecclesiastes	Solomon	935 BC	
Song of Solomon		965 BC	
Isaiah	Isaiah	740 - 680 BC	Prophecy
Jeremiah	Jeremiah	627 - 585 BC	
Lamentations		586 - 585 BC	
Ezekiel	The books are named after the prophets who wrote them	592 - 570 BC	Prophecy / Narrative
Daniel		537 BC	
Hosea		710 BC	Prophecy
Joel		835 BC	
Amos		755 BC	
Obadiah		840 or 586 BC	
Jonah		760 BC	Narrative
Micah		700 BC	Prophecy
Nahum		663 - 612 BC	
Habakkuk		607 BC	
Zephaniah		625 BC	
Haggai		520 BC	
Zechariah		520 - 518 BC	
Malachi		450 - 400 BC	
Matthew		Matthew (<i>disciple</i>)	60s AD
Mark	Mark	50s AD	
Luke	Luke	60 AD	
John	John (<i>disciple</i>)	85 - 90 AD	
Acts	Luke	61 AD	
Romans	Paul	58 AD	Epistles
1 & 2 Corinthians		56 - 57 AD	
Galatians		49 or 55 AD	
Ephesians		61 AD	
Philippians			
Colossians		51 AD	
1 & 2 Thessalonians			
1 & 2 Timothy		63 - 66 AD	
Titus		65 AD	
Philemon		61 AD	
Hebrews	< <i>Unknown</i> >	64 - 68 AD	
James	James (<i>brother of Jesus</i>)	45 - 50 AD	
1 & 2 Peter	Peter (<i>disciple</i>)	60 AD	
1, 2 & 3 John	John (<i>disciple</i>)	90 AD	
Jude	Jude (<i>brother of Jesus</i>)	70 - 80 AD	
Revelation	John (<i>disciple</i>)	90s AD	Prophecy