

## The Bible in Brief

Below is a list of a brief summary of the content each book in the Bible. There are 72 books in the Catholic Bible. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the books unique to the Catholic Bible were written in Greek. All the New Testament was written in Greek.

**Genesis** – History of the Patriarchs.

**Exodus** – God delivers His People.

**Leviticus** – Priest's Code.

**Deuteronomy** – Moses' homilies before entering Promised Land.

**Joshua** – God gives land to the Israelites.

**Judges** – God rules People in Promised Land by Judges, not Kings.

**Ruth** – A non-Israelite becomes a distant relative of Jesus.

**1 Samuel** – Tells the life of David before he became King

**2 Samuel** – Tells the life of David after he becomes King.

**1 Kings** – Tells about the Kings of Israel and Judah.

**2 Kings** Tells about the Prophets Elijah and Elisa.

**1 Chronicles** – Another version of the history of the Kings, People go into exile in Babylon; Temple destroyed.

**2 Chronicles** – After the Exile to Babylon.

**Ezra** – End of Exile in Babylon; Temple rebuilt.

**Nehemiah** – Jerusalem is rebuilt.

**Tobit** – Romantic Story of Tobias and his young wife Sarah.

**Judith** – Judith leads an army and kills her enemy with a spear through the head.

**Esther** – Jewish queen of a pagan king who saves all the Jews from being destroyed.

**1 Maccabees** – the Jews fight against the Greeks.

**2 Maccabees** – the Jews fight the Greeks to reclaim the Temple.

**Job** – classic book about the meaning of suffering.

**Psalms** – the classic prayer book of Jews and Christians.

**Proverbs** – Short sentences of great wisdom.

**Ecclesiastes** – The author tries to figure out why life seems to be a waste at times.

**Song of Solomon (Song of Songs)** – romantic love poem between two lovers.

**Sirach** – Wisdom is praised; lessons on how to speak well; how to find the right husband/wife.

**Isaiah** – Longest book in the Bible. Writes a warning about the Exile to come.

**Jeremiah** – The Prophet experiences personally the wrath to occur on Jerusalem if people continue to sin.

**Lamentations** – Jeremiah writes this letter about the fall of Jerusalem.

**Baruch** – the secretary of Jeremiah writes this letter – about the rags to riches of Jerusalem's future.

**Ezekiel** – Ezekiel, was called by God to do some very strange things like dig holes in walls to show the future fall of Jerusalem.

**Daniel** – Daniel is one of the exiles into Babylon, but has some extraordinary gifts of prophesy.

**Hosea** – the prophet marries an unfaithful prostitute to show how much God loves his people no matter what.

**Joel** – A prophet who sternly chastises the religious leaders of his time.

**Amos** – A farmer from the north who God calls to be a prophet in the big city of the south.

**Obadiah** – A 21 verse book full of wrath and vengeance.

**Jonah** – a darkly funny story of an anti-Prophet Jonah.

**Nahum** – "The Lord is slow to anger, yet great in power, and the Lord never leaves the guilty unpunished." –Nahum 1:3

**Micah** – About what God will do after all sin has been destroyed from Israel, Judah and Babylon: He will start fresh with mercy.

**Habakkuk** – The patient prophet who God was not clear with.

**Zephaniah** – Book most about the end of the world.

**Haggai** – Written 18 years after the return from the Exile in Babylon; time to rebuild (see Micah).

**Zechariah** – About the coming of the new pure priests and a new spirit.

**Malachi** – Coming attractions: Messiah, coming of Jesus – last book in the Old Testament.

## New Testament

### Gospels

**Gospel of Matthew** – Jesus presented as fulfilling all the Old Testament.

**Gospel of Mark** – Jesus as God in the flesh, Suffering Servant.

**Gospel of Luke** – Jesus teaches as He walks from Galilee to Jerusalem, to suffer, die and rise.

**Gospel of John** – Jesus is the Divine Word in the Flesh.

**Acts of the Apostles** – Second half of Luke; Church goes from Jerusalem to known world.

### Individual Letters of Paul

**Romans** – St. Paul planned to stop at Rome on his way to Spain. In order to prepare the way for his visit, St. Paul sent them an Epistle, in which he summed up the principal points of his teaching and at the same time reviewed the teaching of the Epistle to the Galatians.

**1 Corinthians** – This Epistle is a solution of pastoral problems which arose in his mission at Corinth and which were referred to the Apostle for solution. He then answers the questions which had been submitted to him (7:1 to 15:58) and which dealt with marriage, virginity, meats sacrificed to idols, the proper decorum in worship, the Eucharist and the love feasts, charismatic gifts and the resurrection of the dead.

**2 Corinthians** – The Judaizers (those who wanted Christians to convert back to Judaism), who had invaded Corinth, were making various insinuations about St. Paul's character and his work. The Second Epistle is St. Paul's defence of his apostolic authority and of the purity of his Gospel.

**Galatians** – The Epistle to the Galatians was written to refute these zealots of the Mosaic Law. e proves that the Galatians received the Holy Spirit not because of their observance of the Law but because of faith; that Abraham was justified by faith before circumcision or the giving of the Law

**Ephesians** - This epistle is an encyclical circular letter, addressed to the church of Ephesus and to the churches of Asia Minor, to explain to them that they are not isolated groups but incorporated into one and the same mystic body.

**Philippians**- This is a letter of gratitude and joy addressed by the Apostle to his beloved converts at Philippi, who had befriended him and helped him on more than one occasion.

**Colossians** - This epistle was written in defence of Christ's divinity and the dignity of our life in Christ against certain false teachers, who had invaded Colossae, and advocated the cult of angels as necessary for salvation, in this way minimizing the dignity of Christ, the one sole Mediator.

**1 Thessalonians** - Some of the Thessalonian Christians, whom St. Paul converted about 50 A.D., had not wholly emerged from the Gentile way of living, were given to leisure and laziness thinking that Christ's return was at hand, and were extremely anxious about the lot of the dead at the second coming of Christ.

**2 Thessalonians** - The day of Our Lord's coming, though uncertain, is not yet at hand; it will be preceded by certain signs, such as the man of sin, the apostasy of many, the destruction of the adversary. Paul urges the Thessalonians to pray and to avoid laziness.

**1 & 2 Timothy and Titus** - These Epistles are called "Pastoral Epistles" because they were addressed to the pastors or bishops of the faithful and deal with Church government and the hierarchy. They treat of the following five points:

- 1) The necessity of preserving the purity of doctrine;
- 2) The method of proceeding against false teachers;
- 3) The rules to be observed in selecting men for the diaconate, priesthood and episcopacy;
- 4) Obedience towards religious superiors;
- 5) Duties of various groups of the faithful.

**Philemon** - This Epistle is a letter which St. Paul sent with Onesimus, a run-away slave, to the latter's master, Philemon. In this letter St. Paul asks Philemon to restore and, if possible, to free Onesimus. It has been called the Epistle of Emancipation.

**Hebrews** - The purpose of this Epistle was to point out the great superiority of the New Testament over the Old and to prevent the Christian Jews under the stress of persecution from falling back into Judaism which at the time had taken on a new vigour and splendour.

### Catholic letters (Letters written to all people, not only cities or some individuals)

**James** - This Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians, who maintained a close connection with the mother church in Jerusalem, but who did not express their faith sufficiently in good works, especially, works of charity, mercy and mortification of the tongue.

**1 Peter** - This Epistle is directed to the faithful of several provinces who were on the point of defecting from the Christian faith because of persecutions from both Jews and Gentiles. St. Peter places before them their true dignity: They are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of acquisition.

**2 Peter** - In this Epistle St. Peter again warns the Christians of Asia Minor against the heretical teachers who inculcated all kinds of vices and denied Christ and His second coming.

**1 John** - St John warns the Christians against certain heretics who denied Christ's divinity (Ebionites) or who denied that Christ came in the flesh (Docetae). The Apostle briefly explains the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Redemption and urges all to practice charity.

**2 John** - St. John urges the Christians to preserve the faith, practice charity, and avoid heretics who were teaching that Christ did not come in the flesh.

**3 John** - This is a commendatory letter written to a certain Caius, who gave hospitality to Christian preachers sent out by John.

**Jude** - This Epistle was written to Jews of both Palestine and the Dispersion whose communities had been invaded by fallen away Christians. These false teachers denied Christ's Divinity, His teachings and His second coming, blasphemed the angels, and inculcated pagan vices. St. Jude bids the Christians to stand firm in the faith delivered to the saints.

**Revelation** - A series of visions from St. John. He wrote them under divine inspiration like the prophets of the Old Testament. The visions are full of various messages to be delivered to individual communities of Christians.