THE 39 BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis through Malachi • NKJV / KJV order • Printable study reference

1. THE LAW • 5 BOOKS

The Pentateuch / Books of Moses

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

Teaching focus: Creation, covenant, holiness, worship.

2. HISTORY • 12 BOOKS

Israel's leadership, kingdom, exile and return

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Ruth
4. 1 Samuel
5. 2 Samuel
6. 1 Kings
7. 2 Kings
8. 1 Chronicles
9. 2 Chronicles
10. Ezra
11. Nehemiah
12. Esther

Teaching focus: God remains faithful amid human failure.

3. POETRY & WISDOM • 5 BOOKS

Worship, lament, wisdom and life

1. Job
2. Psalms
3. Proverbs
4. Ecclesiastes
5. Song of Solomon

Teaching focus: How to pray, fear God and live wisely.

4. MAJOR PROPHETS • 5 BOOKS

Longer prophetic books

1. Isaiah
2. Jeremiah
3. Lamentations
4. Ezekiel
5. Daniel

Teaching focus: Judgment, hope and future restoration.

5. MINOR PROPHETS • 12 BOOKS

The twelve shorter prophetic books

1. Hosea
2. Joel
3. Amos
4. Obadiah
5. Jonah
6. Micah
7. Nahum
8. Habakkuk
9. Zephaniah
10. Haggai
11. Zechariah
12. Malachi

Teaching focus: Repentance, justice, mercy and hope.

REMEMBER THE COUNT **5 + 12 + 5 + 5 + 12 = 39 books**

Note: “Major” and “Minor” refer mainly to book length, not importance. These five sections follow the traditional Protestant Christian arrangement, not strict chronological order.

OLD TESTAMENT • TEACHING HIGHLIGHTS

Read the books in context. Follow the unfolding story. See how Scripture points to Christ.

THE BIG PICTURE: ONE UNFOLDING STORY

CREATION & FALL	ABRAHAM & PROMISE	EXODUS & LAW	KINGS & PROPHETS	EXILE & RETURN	MESSIAH & KINGDOM

Progressive revelation: God revealed His redemptive plan across history—through promises, covenants, the Law, kings and prophets—culminating in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1–2; Luke 24:27).

FIVE SECTIONS — WHAT TO TEACH

THE LAW

God creates, humanity falls, and God calls a covenant people. The Law teaches Israel about worship, holiness and the seriousness of sin.

KEY TEXTS: Genesis 12:1–3 • Exodus 19:5–6 • Deuteronomy 6:4–5

HISTORY

Israel enters the land, experiences judges and kings, then exile and return. The narrative records both obedience and failure; it points toward the promised Davidic King.

KEY TEXTS: Joshua 24:15 • Judges 2:11–19 • 2 Samuel 7:12–16

POETRY & WISDOM

Job wrestles with suffering; Psalms gives language for prayer; Proverbs teaches wise living; Ecclesiastes probes life's meaning; Song of Solomon celebrates love.

KEY TEXTS: Psalm 1 • Proverbs 1:7 • Ecclesiastes 12:13

MAJOR PROPHETS

These books expose sin and offer hope: Isaiah's Servant, Jeremiah's new covenant, Lamentations' grief, Ezekiel's renewal, and Daniel's kingdom.

KEY TEXTS: Isaiah 53 • Jeremiah 31:31–34 • Ezekiel 36:26–27

MINOR PROPHETS

The Twelve call people to repent, practice justice, show covenant faithfulness and trust the Lord. Their shorter length does not make their message less important.

KEY TEXTS: Hosea 6:6 • Micah 6:8 • Zechariah 9:9

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO CHRIST

PROMISE
Abraham's blessing to the nations → Galatians 3:8, 16 (Genesis 12:3)

KING
David's promised dynasty → Jesus' reign (2 Samuel 7; Luke 1:32–33)

SACRIFICE
Passover and atonement → Christ's sacrifice (Exodus 12; Hebrews 9–10)

NEW COVENANT
Promised forgiveness and renewal → Jesus (Jeremiah 31; Luke 22:20)

THREE QUESTIONS FOR EVERY LESSON

1. What did this mean to its original audience? 2. What does it reveal about God and people?
3. How does this fit the whole biblical story fulfilled in Christ?

Teaching caution: Prophecy is not only prediction; poetry is not prose; Proverbs are not blanket promises.