

LOOK INTO THE BIBLE



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FOREWORD

For many children and young people the Bible is a closed book. Even when it is opened its message often appears obscure compared with the powerful slogans of today's media. The distant geography, the ancient culture, the complexities of history are all obstacles to understanding. Add to that the varieties of literature and the differing styles of the biblical authors telling their story against concepts of time and place quite different from our own and it is hardly surprising that many youngsters reject the Bible as boring, difficult or irrelevant. Yet if these barriers can be overcome, God's message can be understood and seen to be as applicable as it ever was.

Look into the Bible seeks to assist children in the upper junior/lower secondary age range to move from the immediate problems of understanding the words, the history and the culture of the Bible to hearing what God has to say about contemporary situations. In a way, it is a junior 'commentary' to the whole Bible.

Many people have been involved in creating this book. Using a variety of styles of writing, pictures, maps and diagrams, their one aim has been to draw the reader into the Bible and its world in order to show how God continues to meet people and communicate with them today.

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Abbreviations

Books of the Bible

The following abbreviations are used for names of Bible books.

Old Testament

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
Sam	Samuel
Kings	Kings
Chron	Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh	Nehemiah
Esther	Esther
Job	Job
Ps	Psalms
Prov	Proverbs
Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs	Song of Songs
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations
Ezek	Ezekiel
Dan	Daniel
Hos	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad	Obadiah
Jon	Jonah
Mic	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Hab	Habakkuk
Zeph	Zephaniah
Hag	Haggai
Zech	Zechariah
Mal	Malachi

New Testament

Matt	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	The Acts of the Apostles
Rom	Romans
Cor	Corinthians
Gal	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Phil	Philippians
Col	Colossians
Thess	Thessalonians
Tim	Timothy
Titus	Titus
Philm	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews
Jas	James
Pet	Peter
John	John
Jude	Jude
Rev	Revelation

Bible references

References to verses in the Bible are written like this:
Gen 8:22, which means Genesis chapter 8, verse 22.
Where several verses are included the reference is written as Acts 4:1–22, which means Acts chapter 4 verses 1 to 22.

References are quoted from the Good News Bible.

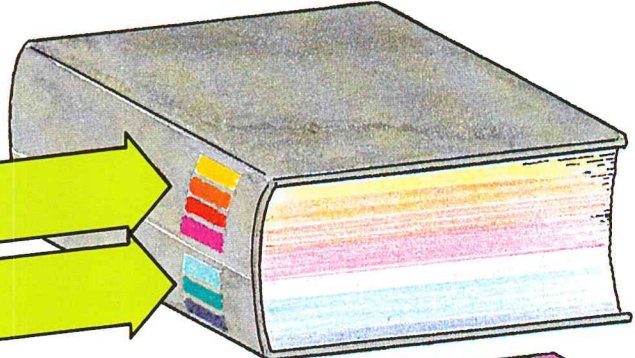
THE WAY IN

Unpacking the Bible

The Bible is not like an ordinary book. It is a large collection of sixty-six separate books inside one cover. When we unpack them we find that the books are in two main sections:

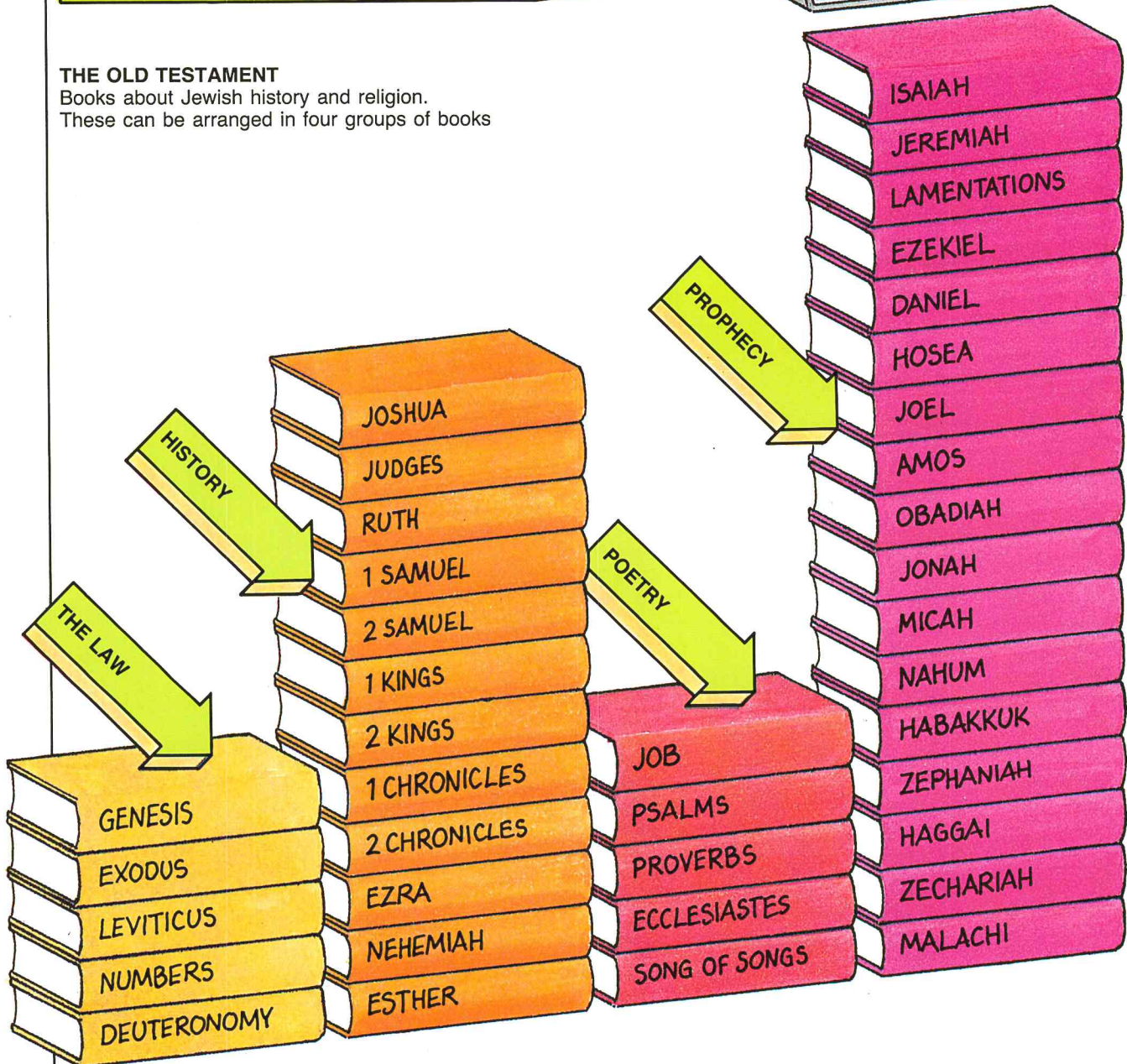
The Old Testament – 39 books

The New Testament – 27 books



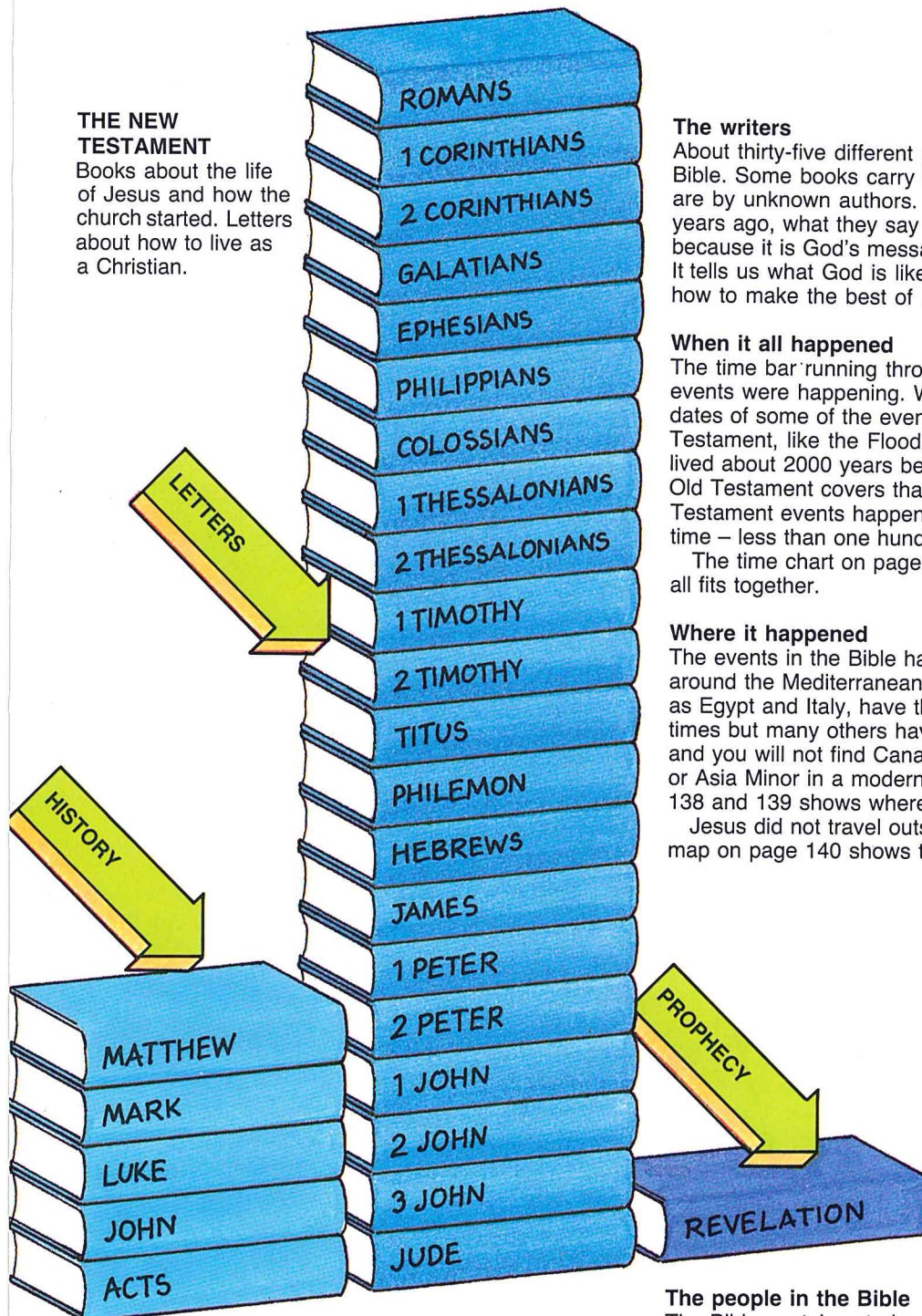
THE OLD TESTAMENT

Books about Jewish history and religion. These can be arranged in four groups of books



THE NEW TESTAMENT

Books about the life of Jesus and how the church started. Letters about how to live as a Christian.



The writers

About thirty-five different people wrote the books in the Bible. Some books carry the name of the writer; others are by unknown authors. Although they wrote many years ago, what they say is important for us today because it is God's message for people in every age. It tells us what God is like, how we can know him and how to make the best of life.

When it all happened

The time bar running through this book shows when events were happening. We do not know the exact dates of some of the events at the beginning of the Old Testament, like the Flood, but we know that Abraham lived about 2000 years before Jesus was born, so the Old Testament covers that period of time. The New Testament events happened in a much shorter space of time – less than one hundred years.

The time chart on pages 136 and 137 shows how it all fits together.

Where it happened

The events in the Bible happened in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea. Some countries, such as Egypt and Italy, have the same names as in Bible times but many others have since changed their names and you will not find Canaan, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia or Asia Minor in a modern atlas. The map on pages 138 and 139 shows where the Bible lands are.

Jesus did not travel outside the land of Palestine. The map on page 140 shows the country in his lifetime.

The people in the Bible

The Bible contains stories about many different people and how they responded to God. We read about kings, fishermen, housewives, shepherds, government officials, traders, farmers and so on. Children are there and old people too. Many of them are well known – Noah, Joseph, Ruth, David, Peter, Paul. Others you may meet for the first time in the pages of this book.

On pages 134 and 135 there is a list of the main people and a guide to where they appear in the Bible.

THE BEGINNING OF A NATION

GENESIS, EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY

The first five books of the Old Testament are sometimes called the Pentateuch. Pentateuch simply means 'five books' (or literally 'five scrolls'). Other names for them include 'The Books of Moses', 'The Law of Moses', 'The Book of the Law'. Jesus referred to it in his teaching, eg Luke 24:27. These five books are a very important part of all the Old Testament teaching.

GENESIS

A book of beginnings: The beginning of the universe. The beginning of life. A new beginning after the flood. The beginning of God's chosen people – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

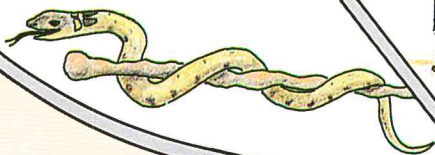


DEUTERONOMY

Another book of laws, and of looking back at what God has done for the people. It also looks forward to the blessing God will give the people if they remain true to him.

NUMBERS

Not a maths book but a book of problems! Problems with counting the Israelites, problems with the food, problems with Miriam and Aaron, problems with conquering Canaan, problems with rebellion by the people, problems with the poisonous snakes, problems with the report of the spies.



EXODUS

A book of escapes: Escape for baby Moses. Escape for the Israelites from Egypt. Escape through the Red Sea. Escape from the old way of life as God gives new laws.

LEVITICUS

A book of laws: Laws about offerings and sacrifices, laws about good food and illnesses, laws about dry rot and damp, laws about sex and marriage, laws about slaves and Sabbaths, laws about priests and worship, laws about feasts and festivals.



The Writer

These books themselves tell us that Moses wrote certain parts of them, see Exodus 24:4 and Numbers 33:2. It is likely that the five books

we have in our Bible now are largely the work of Moses which have been edited at some later date.