

## About the bible

The bible is for Christians God speaking. A popular verse<sup>i</sup> explains it as follows:

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living,<sup>17</sup> so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.”*

The bible is really a collection of books and is universally accepted to contain 66 books divided as follows:

- **Old Testament (OT)** which comprises of 39 books which are based primarily on the Hebrew bible (or Tanakh)<sup>ii</sup>
- **The New Testament (NT)** which comprises of 27 books which are based primarily on the writings/letters of the apostles of Jesus Christ, who are considered by Christians to be the “Messiah” – who was prophesied about in the Old testament/Hebrew scriptures.

The bible was formally written over an approximate 1,500 year period but many parts would be based on earlier writings including oral history faithfully passed down from generation to generation. By c. 250 AD Old Testament was considered finalised and by 393 AD following a number of meetings and a process of assessing what was divinely inspired, the New Testament was similarly finalised.

### How do you know that the bible is true?

Many of the events in the bible including places and people have been corroborated through witnesses, archaeology or other sources. The bible itself gives an example of a “test” for what is truly from God<sup>iii</sup>: *“If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it.”* On this basis, many of the predictions made by prophets many years earlier gave proof of this. Examples in the bible included the Prophet Isaiah who in around 700 BC prophesied that a virgin would give birth to a baby. This prophesy being fulfilled with Jesus’ birth amongst others. This gave the later readers further proof of the scriptures being the very breath of God.

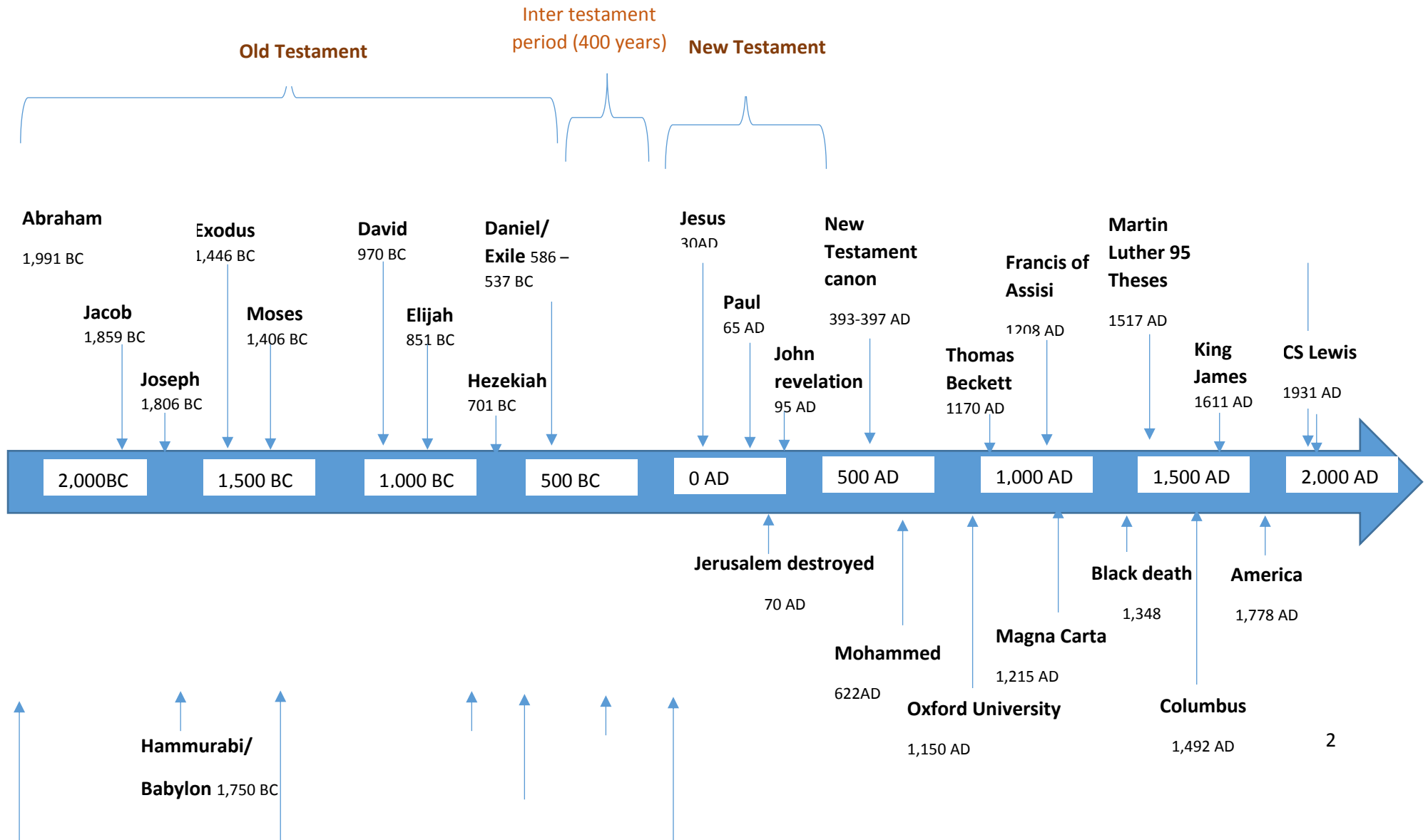
To know how to read the bible, it is generally been divided in the following 3 ways or levels

- Books (e.g Genesis or often abbreviated to “Gen”)
- Chapters (e.g Chapter 1)
- Verse (e.g 1)

Hence where you see a reference such *Gen 1: 1* means Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 1.

## Bible time line

When you read the bible, you will see many stories, how do these relate to other events in history? The timeline below can help you put this into perspective.<sup>iv</sup>



**Assyria**  
900 BC

**Alexander the  
Great** 330 BC

**Buddha**

400 BC

**Pyramids of Giza**

2,500 BC

**Hittites**

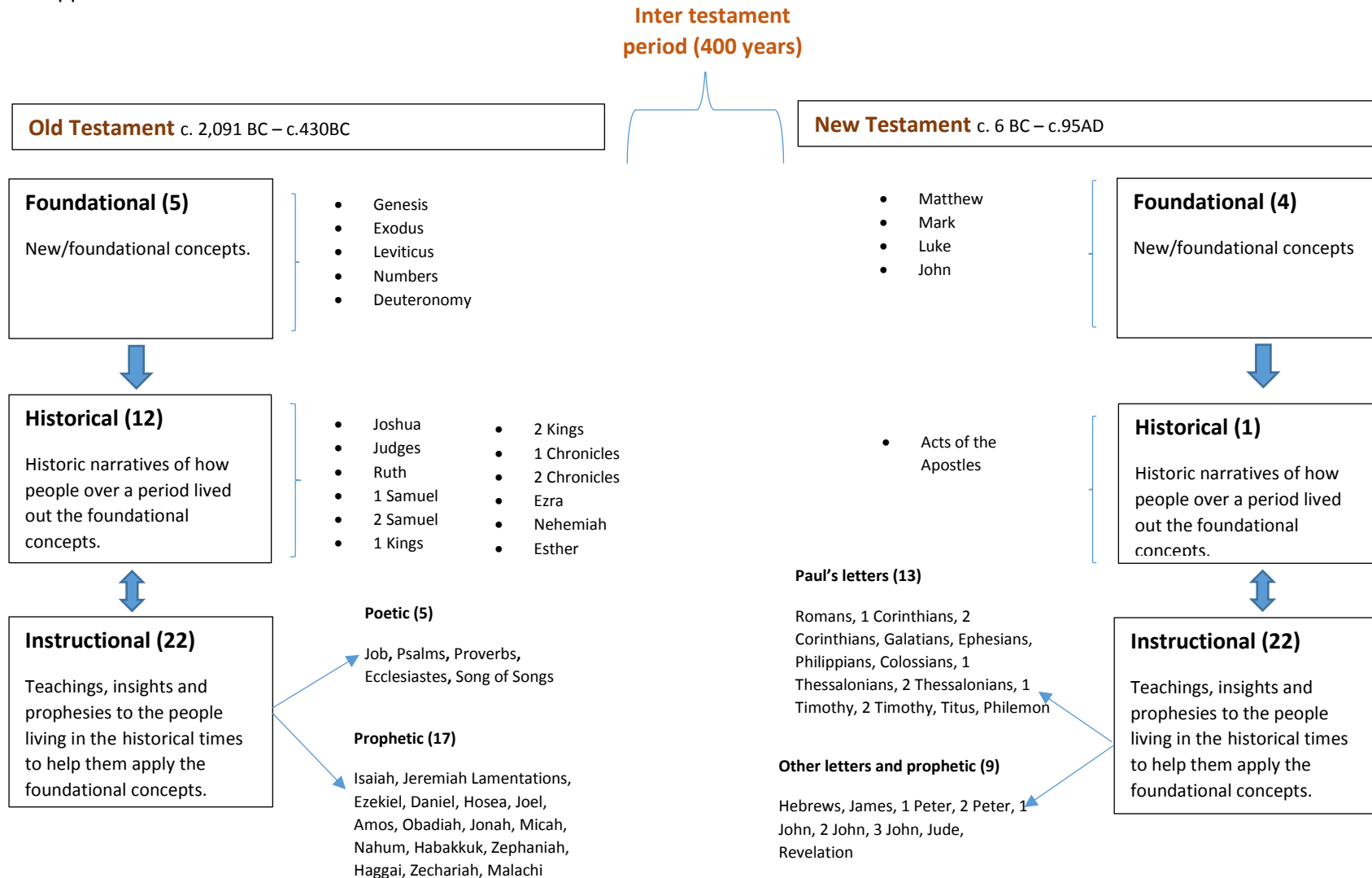
1,600 BC

**Roman empire**

100 BC

## How the bible is structured

The overall structure of the books of the bible in order to understand how they relate to each other is diagrammatically shown as below. <sup>v</sup> The dates used are approximate. <sup>vi</sup>



## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> 2 Timothy 3: 16 – 17 (GNT)

<sup>ii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old\\_Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament)

<sup>iii</sup> Deuteronomy 18: 22

<sup>iv</sup> Sources: <http://biblehub.com/timeline/#complete>; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/important-events-in-church-history-christian-history.html>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_ancient\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_ancient_history)

<sup>v</sup> Adapted from Bible Survey, A Big Screen Perspective, Dr. Bert Downs from [www. biblicaltraining.org](http://www.biblicaltraining.org)

<sup>vi</sup> <http://biblehub.com/timeline/#complete>