

PENTATEUCH

Genesis through Deuteronomy

Old Testament

Place this bookmark on the last page of the book of Deuteronomy. Welcome to the section called the "Pentateuch" or "Torah," meaning the five books of the Law. This section captures the beginnings of the relationship between God and the people of Israel with the central focus being the Exodus event—the experience of being led from slavery to freedom. Here are some of the highlights:

- the Creation stories
- Adam and Eve
- Cain and Abel
- Noah's ark
- the Tower of Babel
- Sodom and Gomorrah
- Abraham and Sarah
- Isaac and Rebekah
- Jacob and Esau
- Joseph (the coat of many colors)
- Moses (in the reeds, the burning bush, the ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the Passover, the Ten Commandments, the Ark of the Covenant, the journey through the desert, the death of Moses)
- the twelve tribes of Israel
- the laws, traditions, and feasts of Israel

HISTORY

Joshua through 2 Maccabees

Old Testament

Place this bookmark on the last page of 2 Maccabees. You've now entered the History section of the Bible—the section that records the story of the people of Israel who, under various leaders (judges and kings), fought to establish and keep the Promised Land. Here are the highlights:

- Joshua (crossing the Jordan, the walls of Jericho)
- Samson and Delilah
- Ruth and Naomi
- Samuel (request for a king)
- King Saul
- David and Goliath; King David
- Solomon (the temple, Queen of Sheba)
- Elijah and Elisha
- many kings, battles, and genealogies
- division of the kingdom
- Exile and return
- Judith and Esther

WISDOM

Job through Sirach

Old Testament

Place this bookmark at the end of the book of Sirach. You're now ready to explore the Wisdom section of the Bible. While the Bible contains wisdom throughout, this section collects the wisdom of the people of Israel over thousands of years of wandering the desert, living in the Promised Land, worshiping in the temple, and struggling through the Exile. Among the many anecdotes, sayings, prayers, poems, and songs, here are some highlights:

- Job's suffering
- 150 Psalms for all occasions
- hundreds of proverbs
- wise sayings, including "Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!" and "There is a time for everything" and "A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter" and more
- a romantic love song
- thousands more sayings about wisdom, prudence, good health, wealth, holiness, family, friends, misery, death, and even table etiquette

PROPHETS

Isaiah through Malachi

Old Testament

Place this at the end of the book of Malachi and welcome to the last section of the Old Testament—the Prophets. The prophets were not concerned with foretelling the future as much as with calling the people of Israel back to their past fidelity to God, lest they face doom. Likewise, they held out hope for the future when the people of Israel faced dire consequences in exile. This hope was the notion of a messiah and an everlasting kingdom. Yet, even these assurances of a future are accompanied by a call for a return to the fidelity of the past. Here are some highlights:

The major (meaning lengthier) prophets

- Isaiah (Immanuel, "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light," "comfort my people," etc.)
- Jeremiah (call of Jeremiah, Exile and return)
- Ezekiel (the dry bones)

The minor (meaning briefer) prophets

- Daniel (the lion's den, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)
- Hosea (the unfaithful wife)
- Joel (the Day of the Lord)
- Amos (the call to justice)
- Jonah (swallowed by a large fish)